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 Gypsy's sowing and reaping

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THE GYPSY SERIES.

GYPSY'S SOWING AND REAPING

BY

E. STUART PHELPS,

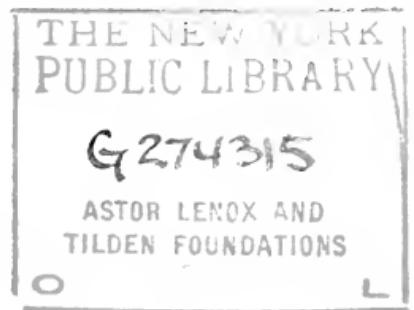
AUTHOR OF "GYPSY BREVNTON," "GYPSY'S COUSIN JOY," ETC.

"For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather,
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands."

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GYPSY'S SOWING AND REAPING.

CHAPTER I.

THE NEST IN THE HAY.



GYPSY, Gypsy!"

Nobody answered.

"*Gypsy!*"

A social young rooster, thinking himself personally addressed, replied to the name by a cheerful crow, and the cat, roused from her nap in the sunny corner by the hogshead, came up purring to rub herself against Tom's boot. Otherwise, the yard was quite still; so was the lane, and he had searched the chaise-house thoroughly. Of twenty or more places, any one of which Gypsy was as likely to be in as in any other, it was by no means easy to

know which to choose. Tom decided on the barn, and pushing open the stable door, he walked in, as Tom walked in everywhere, — with his hands in his pockets, whistling.

There was a stir of the warm, clover-scented air, and a faint rustling somewhere overhead.

“ Gypsy, is that you ? ”

“ Ye—s. What do you want ? ”

“ Why didn’t you answer a fellow before ? I’ve been calling you *post hominum memoriam*.”

“ He might show off his Latin, — so he might ! ” interrupted the voice from overhead.

“ Didn’t you hear me ? ” demanded Tom, sublimely ignoring the thrust. Gypsy did not answer, and he climbed up into the loft to see about it.

“ Well done ! If you don’t look as much like the brown pullet as any other simile that presents itself to the vivid imagination ! ”

Down in the sweet, warm hay, among the dried clover and buttercups and feathered grass,

A great hollow was scooped like a nest, and out of it rose a round, nut-brown face, with brown eyes and ripe, red lips, and hair as black as a coal. As one climbed up the ladder, that was all that could be seen.

"Oh, thank you," said Gypsy, looking up carelessly, "you're always complimentary, but I'm afraid you're outdoing yourself. The brown pullet's a handsome hen, anyway."

"I really should like to know whether you heard me or not," said Tom, sitting down on the hay beside her. Gypsy arched her pretty eyebrows.

"Can't you give a fellow a civil answer?"

"Certainly; but I'm afraid you won't think it's very civil after I've given it. Will you have it, or won't you?"

"I'll have it."

"Well, then, I — suppose I did hear you. I didn't mean you should know, but 'I can't tell a lie, pa, I can't tell a lie.'"

"Why didn't you have the politeness to answer, then?" said Tom, with a genuine, elder-brotherly frown.

"It was impolite, I know, but you see I wanted to get through."

"Through?"

"Yes. I knew if you came I shouldn't do a stitch, and I came up here to mend, — don't you tell?"

"No."

"Well, I tore my dress, my bran new Fall delaine, and the very first morning I've had it on, — down the placket, clear way to the hem, running after Mrs. Surly's puppy, and the horrid little thing stood and barked at me just as if he were glad of it. Then you see she does so much mending for me."

"The puppy?"

"Of course."

"Oh, Mrs. Surly?"

"Exactly. Mother sends the clothes over to

her every Wednesday night, and brings them back in a wheelbarrow Saturdays. I'm astonished you didn't know that without asking. Any more remarks?"

"Well, not just at present. If I think of any more, I'll let you know."

"Very well; I'll go on, then. You see mother is forever sewing for me, and so I thought it was too bad in me, and I'd come up here and get it all mended without anybody's knowing. Besides, I'm in a terrible hurry to go to Sarah Rowe's. Ow! — there goes my needle! Move away a little, please, and let me hunt."

"Well, that's the first time I ever saw anybody seriously set to work to 'hunt for a needle in a hay-mow.' If it isn't just like you! I hope you expect to find it."

"Here it is," said Gypsy, in triumph, picking it out from her boot-lacing where it had stuck. Tom subsided.

"There!" said Gypsy, after a moment's silence, in which her needle had been flying fast, — so fast that I would not undertake to say anything about the size of the stitches, "I guess that will go. To be sure it's all puckers, and I don't know what mother'd say to sewing it with green thread, but it doesn't deserve any better, — the old thing! it needn't have torn anyway. Now I'm going to Sarah's."

"My company's not wanted, then," said Tom, beginning to climb down the ladder. "I'll make myself scarce."

"Why, I didn't mean to send you off. Did you want anything particular?"

"Oh, nothing, only I felt kind of social. You'll be rid of me soon enough, when I'm gone to college."

"I don't want to be rid of you, Tom. I'd love to stop and talk now, only you see Sarah she's got a mud-turtle as big as a dinner-plate, swimming round in a hogshead, and I promised I'd come over and see it."

“ Oh, well, run along.”

Tom was out of the barn by this time.

“ Do you care ? ” called Gypsy, going down the ladder as nimbly as a monkey. But Tom was out of sight and hearing.

Gypsy walked slowly out of the yard and up the street. She had not gone far before her bright face clouded, and she stopped, standing irresolute ; then turned round and ran back as fast as she could go, which was pretty fast.

She found Tom sitting on the back-door steps, whittling and whistling.

“ Well,” said Gypsy.

“ Well ? ” said Tom.

“ I’ve come back.”

“ So I perceive.”

“ I thought I’d rather see you than Sarah. What did you want to talk about ? ”

“ Oh, nothing in particular. You needn’t have troubled yourself.”

Gypsy saw at once that there *had* been some-

thing in particular, and that she had thrown away the chance of hearing it. She thought, too, how soon Tom was going away, and how few more talks they should have together. She felt sorry and vexed; but vexed with herself only.

Tom whittled his pine stick to a point, and looked out of the corners of his eyes at her as she sat on the step beside him, her face half turned away, her merry lips saddened a little. After his genuine boy's fashion, Tom was not quite ready to yield his point and his pride with it. Whatever he had meant to say, he preferred that Gypsy should tease for it; or come at it by some extra touch of humility. Gypsy did not see the sidelong look, and no one could have inferred from Tom's cool, obstinate silence, and the remarkably absorbed manner with which he was devoting himself to his whittling, that he really appreciated the little sacrifice that she had made in coming back to talk with him; that he

was thinking of just that and nothing else ; that it had pleased and surprised him. You remember the old Bible story of the seed dropped into good ground ? Just such a seed was that little sacrifice , the first of many others with which this year just now begun, should be filled ; the forerunner of much toilsome planting and wearying watch, — the promise of a golden harvest. Both brother and sister had in that moment, when they were sitting there in silence, a vague, half-conscious thought like this ; and both the thought and the circumstance which led to it, were of more importance to them than either supposed.

“ Tom,” said Gypsy presently, “ I wish you’d come down to the Basin and take a row.”

“ I don’t know as I care much about it. Better go see your turtle.”

“ I don’t want to go and see the turtle. Please, Tom, do.”

It went very much against the grain for

Gypsy to tease. Tom knew that she never did it without some unusual object in view, and he understood what the object was in this case. So, throwing away his pine stick, he said, with somewhat less of his lordly style —

“ Well, I don’t care if I do. Come along.”

Gypsy came along with a brighter face.

The lane was looking somewhat seared and brown in the late August sun; but the hazel-nuts were ripe on the long row of bushes that grew by the wall, so that one could pick and eat as one walked; then the sunlight was cool, and the wind was sweet and strong,—so that on the whole, the half-mile walk to the pond was quite as pleasant as in the earlier summer. Upon the water it was much more comfortable than it would be under a burning July sun.

Tom and Gypsy took each an oar, and pushed off into the shade of the Kleiner Berg. Then they let the Dipper float idly back and forth at

the foot of the mountain, framed in by the shadow and coolness and stillness.

“I wish you’d tell me what you were going to say,” said Gypsy, leaning over the side of the boat to let her hand fall in the water.

“Oh, nonsense! let that go. I wasn’t going to say anything, and if I was, I’ve forgotten it now. See here, do you know I go week after next?”

“Week after next! So soon! Why, I’d forgotten.”

“Week after next Monday, at six A. M. ma’am.”

“Tom, what *do* you suppose I’m going to do without you?”

“Mend your dresses and run after puppies.”

“No, but,” said Gypsy, laughing in spite of herself, “I mean really. I shall miss you terribly, Tom.”

“I’ll risk it.”

“Thom-as *Breynton*!

She pulled her hand up suddenly out of the water, and jumped into his lap, throwing both her arms around his neck, her soft, brown eyes looking into his.

“Tom, don’t you know I shall miss you? Don’t you know I love you better than anything on this earth but mother? And I haven’t been away from you more than a fortnight in all my life. Oh, Tom!”

“You’ll tip the boat over,” said undemonstrative Tom. Nevertheless, he kissed her.

“I do believe you’re glad to go,” said Gypsy, putting up her red lips reproachfully.

“Yale College is a jolly place. Swe-de le-we-tchu-hi-ra-sa!” sang Tom. “Can’t say I’m sorry. I expect to have a gay time. Swe-de-le-we-dum-bum!”

“I believe it’s you that are glad to get rid of me, Tom.”

“Oh, no,” said Tom, coolly, “not at all. I’ve no desire to get rid of you. You do very well for a girl.”

“ Well,” said Gypsy, half mollified, for this was Tom’s way of saying how much he loved her, “ anyway, I don’t think you ought to be glad to go.”

Tom snapped a hazel-nut into the water, took off his cap, put it on, and then said, his manner suddenly changing —

“ I say, Gyp, it’s rather queer work, a chap’s ending everything up so all at once, and starting out fresh.”

“ Ending everything up?”

“ The old high school days, — there were a jolly set of boys there, Gypsy, no mistake, — and home and mother and all together.”

“ Yes,” said Gypsy, musingly, “ it seems as if you needed something to *start on*, doesn’t it?”

“ What do you mean?”

“ Why, I don’t know exactly; something to make you know what to do and not make mistakes.”

“ I don’t believe you know what you’re talk-

ing about," said Tom. But Gypsy did know very well. She had a thought which it was hard for her to express, and which Tom's manner of receiving it, stopped short. But she did not forget it; it came up another time.

"Let's go ashore; I'm tired of this," said Tom, suddenly. Gypsy took her oar, and they rowed ashore in silence.

"Gypsy!" said Tom, when they had walked a little way.

"Tom!"

"How much do you suppose father's going to put me on a year?"

Gypsy felt at once that she had come to the root of matters; this was what Tom had come out into the barn to talk about.

"I don't know, I'm sure. How much?"

"Only six hundred."

"Only six hundred! Why, Tom, I think that's ever so much."

"That's because you're a girl," said Tom,

with his superior smile, “ and that’s all you know.”

“ Why, if *I* had six hundred dollars ! ” began Gypsy. But Tom interrupted.

“ I’d as lief be put on rations and kept in a guard-house while I’m about it. I call it mean.”

“ Mean ! Why, Tom, father wouldn’t be mean for anything ! He’ll give you every cent he can afford, and you know it. Why, Tom ! ”

“ Well,” said Tom, rather abashed by the flash in Gypsy’s eyes, “ I didn’t mean exactly that, I suppose. I guess he means to do about right by me ; but I call it pretty small potatoes. Why, Gypsy, there are fellows there who grumble and swear at being cut off with two thousand, Frank Rowe says.”

“ But you can’t do everything the other boys do,” said Gypsy ; “ some of them are a great deal richer than you, you know. Besides, I don’t see how you could use more than six hun

dred dollars if you tried to. If I could get a hundred, I shouldn't know how to spend it."

" My dear child, said Tom, patronizingly, " you cost father three hundred a year, if you cost him a cent."

" Three hundred? Oh, I don't believe it!"

" You do, every bit of it. In the first place, there's your board isn't a copper short of a hundred and fifty; then, you don't get your shoes, and dresses, and alpacas, and bonnets, and feathers, and nonsense, and things, under a hundred more; then — oh, school-books, and dentists' bills, and windows you break, and plates you smash, and lamp-chimneys, and nobody knows what not, — you can put it up as much higher as you choose."

" How funny!" said Gypsy. " I didn't suppose it was more than seventy-five dollars."

" Of course you didn't. Girls never know anything about business; give them a bank bill and an account book, and they're just like fish

out of water. So you see, what with board, clothes, tuition, and various other little necessities of life, I could make way with six hundred."

"But they wouldn't take it all?"

"Then there are the taxes,—Sigma Eps., and all, my dear."

"But taxes and Sarah Eps.—would they take it all?"

"Well, a fellow wants something to get drunk on."

"Oh, Tom!"

"Well, for sprees--gales—good times—anything you call it."

"But father thinks it's enough, doesn't he?"

"I suppose so; ye-es."

"He must know. I don't exactly understand," said Gypsy, slowly.

They had reached the house by this time, and she passed on ahead of him and went up-stairs with a sober face. She was puzzled and a little troubled by this talk with Tom.

CHAPTER II.

GONE.

THE twilight was falling into a **pleasant** room, — a very pleasant room ; there were pictures upon the walls, and flowers and knick-knacks upon the mantel, and books upon the shelves ; there were bright curtains at the windows, and bright flowers upon the carpet, and bright figures upon the papering ; there was also — a little — dust upon the table ; but then, that was an old story, and one became used to it. The window was open, and beyond it hung a sky of flame, golden and ruddy and quivering, deepening and paling, shut in with low, gray clouds. By this window sat the pleasantest thing in the room, and that

was Gypsy ; her figure and face in bold relief against the West, her head bent, her bright black hair falling against her cheeks. She looked flushed and excited and tired ; she held some bit of fancy work in her hands, on which she was sewing very fast, straining her eyes to catch the last of the lingering light ; scraps of ribbon and silk and tinsel were scattered about her on the floor. It was evident that something very mysterious and important was going on ; for her door was locked, and nobody was allowed to come in.

Somebody thought he ought to come in, though, and that was Winnie. This young gentleman having a constitutional inability to comprehend why any privilege, anywhere, under any circumstances, should be denied to him by anybody, stamped up-stairs, and hammered on the door, and demanded entrance.

“Can’t come in.”

“Yes I can come in too. I’m five years old.”

"I can't help it if you are. I'm busy. Go away."

(Thump, thump, thump !)

"Winnie, stop making such a noise, and go down-stairs !"

"I want (thump, thump !) to come in"
(thump !)

"No you can't; and when I say so, I mean it. Run away like a good boy."

"You don't (bang !) mean it neither, and I aint goin' to run away (hammer !) to be a good (bang !) boy."

No answer. Thump ! hammer ! bang ! thump ! Then the enemy changed tactics.

"I say, Gypsy, Delia Guest wants you."

"Indeed !"

"Yes, she does, and I was a-goin' to tell you so to the beginnin', only it — well, it gives me a sore throat to holler through the key-hole. She wants to see you like everything."

"I don't believe it." But there was a rustle

as if Gypsy had dropped her work and were becoming interested.

“ Well, she does, 'n she says she's got the funniest thing to tell you. Let me come (thump !) in.”

“ Oh, Delia always thinks she has something funny to say. I don't believe this is anything. Tell her I'm too busy to come.”

“ Yes it is anything too. She says it's something or nuther 'bout George Holman driving tack-nails into Mr. Guernsey's chair. I want to come in !”

“ Tack-nails into Mr. Guernsey's chair ! — why, I wonder — no, I can't, though. I can't go, Winnie. Tell her I'll hear about it tomorrow. I'm doing something for Tom now, and I can't leave it. Be a good little boy and go away and let me finish.”

“ Tom — Tom — Tom ! It's nothing but Tom, all the time !” called vanquished Winnie, through the key-hole. “ Anyways, I see what you're doin' — so !”

“ What? ”

“ You’re makin’ a skating-cap out of green ribbing. I’m going to tell him.”

“ Do, dear. Run right along quick. Be sure you get it right.” And Winnie stamped down-stairs in good faith.

It was very much as Winnie had said:—“ nothing but Tom all the time.” It is a great day when the first boy goes to college, and Tom suddenly found himself of unheard-of and very agreeable importance in the eyes of all the family. His father must be so busy and worried over his fitting-out, — afraid he had given the boy too much money; then afraid he had not given him enough; wishing he had more for him; wishing he were a rich man like the children’s Uncle George; afraid Tom would never keep his accounts straight; half afraid to trust him; anxious to teach him properly; wondering if he would be ruined by college life like young Rowe; anxious, too, to arrange all his plans

pleasantly for him ; bringing up nobody knew how many ledgers and diaries, pens and ink-bottles, and specimens of paper, from the store, that Tom might take his choice ; changing any and every arrangement at Tom's suggestion, a dozen times a day ; spoiling him by indulgence, one minute, and worrying him by anxiety the next ; behaving, generally, very much like Mr. Breynton. Tom was used to his father, and, though often worried out of good temper by his nervous peculiarities and particularities, yet he undoubtedly loved him, and loved him more than ever in these last days of home-life. He would have been a very ungrateful boy if he had not.

As for his mother, who could tell what there was that she did not do ? For weeks she had scarcely been seen without her thimble. No one but herself knew exactly how much sewing she had done. So many shirts to be cut, button-holes to make, wrist-bands to stitch ; so

much mending and making over ; so much planning and contriving to make a little go a great way ; so much care to sponge up old coats and re-bind old vests, that might save the new a little, and yet never make the boy ashamed of them. Such pies and doughnuts, such cookies and stray bunches of grapes, and mellow, golden pears, as she had collected on the pantry shelf, to adorn the table during Tom's "last days," or to tuck into corners of his trunk. Such scraps of gentle lessons about this strange life into which he was going, as she gave him sometimes when they sat together in the twilight ; such soft kisses as fell on his forehead when she said good-night at last, — these were best of all ; and so Tom thought, though he never said so. Was there ever a boy of seventeen who did ?

Neither was Winnie by any means inactive. For ten days before Tom went, had he not spasmodic attacks of "popping corn for Tom, sir, and you might just let him alone, sir ?"

And did he not collect just twenty-five corns, of which twenty were burnt, and three had never “popped” at all, tie them up in an old lace bag, and carry them in his pocket morning, noon, and night, to say nothing of sleeping with them under his pillow? And is it not recorded that the bag burst, and the contents one by one grew “small by degrees and beautifully less,” but that Winnie didn’t mind that in the least; how he finally pinned it with a rusty pin on the cleanest collar he could find in the trunk, and how he believes to this day that Tom ate every one of those corns, with a faith that amounts to sublimity?

Even Patty must contribute her mite, and, having a vague idea that a collegian was always glad of an addition to his library, what should she do but purchase a Biography of the Blessed Mary, profusely illustrated in gamboge and vermillion, and hope “Mister Tom would take it kindly and be a good boy, poor fellow!”

But to no one in the family was Tom's going away just what it was to Gypsy. Even his mother could not miss him as she should. Tom was very much to her. Since they were little children it had been just so. They had rolled hoop, and played marbles, and played horse, and baked mud-pies together; as they grew older, no boating, riding, skating, and base-ball were quite complete unless they could share them together. Tom was very proud of Gypsy; — “she didn’t screain or faint; and if he had any particular abhorrence it was a screaming, fainting girl. She could handle her oar very well, really very well — under his teaching. She was always on hand for any fun, and never spoiled things by ‘being nervous.’ Besides, she mended a fellow’s gloves without scolding, and if you put her in a parlor she was as much of a lady as anybody.”

Gypsy was very proud of Tom. “Tom was ~~so~~ tall. Tom was handsome. All the girls

liked Tom. Tom was so generous, too, and good, and let her go about with him. Tom never scolded. Make fun of her? Oh, yes, he did that, but she didn't care ; she should miss that as much as anything. To have Tom gone, — gone hour after hour, day in and day out, week upon week, — why, it seemed like cutting a piece of her life right out."

Some such thought as this was in her mind as she sat alone in the twilight which had gathered and deepened, her work lying idly in her lap, — it was quite too dark to sew now, — and her eyes looking sadly off into the dying West. In the midst of the thought, there came a great noise ; a banging and pounding and scraping on the garret floor ; then a banging, and pounding, and scraping, and jouncing, and bouncing down the stairs. Gypsy jumped up, wondering what had happened, and opened the door to see. A huge brown trunk, and Tom behind it.

"Oh, Tom!"

"Oh, Gypsy!"

“ Not the trunk, so soon ? ”

“ Yes, the trunk, so soon. Going to begin to pack to-morrow morning, so I thought I'd have her on hand, as I hadn't anything else to do this particular minute.”

“ Pack to-morrow ! ”

“ Couldn't pack Sunday very well. Don't you remember what the catechism says about it ? ”

“ But it seems so — so — ”

“ So what ? ”

“ So — why, so exactly as if you were going off.”

Tom sat down on the trunk to fan himself with his hat and laugh. Gypsy did not join in the laugh ; she slipped away, and when Tom had carried the trunk down, and dusted it out (with a clean handkerchief), and put in his blacking-box on top of his shirt, “ just to see how things were going to look,” he missed her. After a long and fruitless hunt, he went up garret.

“ Gypsy, are you here ? ”

Something stirred faintly in an old trunk that stood under the eaves, and there sat Gypsy all in a heap, with something very suspiciously bright in both eyes. Tom stared.

“If you could inform the inquiring mind what you are supposed to be doing?”

“I believe—I came up to—cry,” said Gypsy.

“My dear, I would not be such a goose.”

“On the whole, I don’t think I will,” said Gypsy, and jumped out of the trunk, rubbing both fists into her eyes.

As they went past her room—

“What were you locked up so long for to-night?” asked Tom.

“Oh, something. I’ll let you know — let me see — Sunday night, I guess.”

“You needn’t bother yourself so much about me,” said Tom, looking a little surprised. “You’re always doing something. I should like to know how many shirts you helped

mother make. Haven't seen you for three weeks but that you've had your fist stuck into one of my stockings, darning it."

"The fist? Well, you needn't talk about it, Tom. I *like* to do things for you."

Tom walked off whistling. But Tom looked pleased.

The next day came the packing, and this was, as packings always are, rather doleful work for everybody. Poor Gypsy thought it was a little more than she could stand.

"Oh, Tom, how bare the closet looks,—where did I put your brown woollen stockings? — and there's the table with the cloth off, just as if you'd really gone!"

"Here's your box of paper collars,—oh, what will you do without anybody to make you new neck-ties; you always *did* wear them out so fast! Here's your Virgil. Don't want it? Do you remember how you used to sit up in the hay and read me stories out of it? We shant do that any more!"

“ Oh, Tom, what shall I do nights when I come home from school, and you’re not here? — here’s your little clothes-brush — and when I go boating — Mother, did you put that cologne-bottle down in the corner? — and when I come into your room and sit down and look — Oh, Tom ! ”

This was rather forlorn work for Tom, and at last he broke out —

“ I say, Gyp, you’ll make a fellow homesick before his time. Say something sort of gay and festive, can’t you ? ”

Gypsy’s face flushed as she bent over to wrap up a picture and put it in the trunk. Her good sense told her that she had been doing a thoughtless thing. Her good heart taught her how to bring back the old merry Gypsy at a moment’s notice. Tom heard no more sighs.

“ I’m glad your last night is Sabbath night,” said his mother, when it came.

“ I wonder what’s the reason people always

love each other more Sunday nights," said Gypsy, pushing her cricket a little nearer to Tom.
"It's funny, isn't it?"

"It's Tom's last night," said Winnie to Patty, "and you can just give me some of that rharboob preserve. Mother's in the parlor. I had two flapjacks for supper. Don't you wish Tom would go off to college every night?"

"Did you put your wallet in your inside vest pocket, Tom, as I advised?" asked Mr. Breynton, several times in the pauses of the evening. And the last time he asked to see it, and slipped in an extra five-dollar bill.

The singing, and the quiet talk, and the hymns they said, and most of all, his father's prayer, made Tom very still. Towards the end of the evening he slipped away for a few minutes, and Gypsy followed him. She found him out on the doorsteps, with his hat pushed down over his forehead.

"Want me, Tom?"

"Yes, sit down."

She sat down beside him, and putting up her hand on his shoulder, began to stroke him in a comical, demure way, very much as she would a kitten, — Gypsy never did things exactly like other people. But Tom liked it.

“ Homesick, Tom ? ”

“ No,” growled Tom, pushing his hat savagely over his eyes.

“ Not a bit, dear ? ”

The hat went nearly down to his chin.

“ Homesick before I’m out of the house ? What nonsense you talk, Gypsy ! ”

Tom got up and strode severely up and down the yard several times. Then he came back and seemed to feel better.

“ I wonder if you’ll ever think about us Sunday nights,” said Gypsy, indiscreetly.

Tom began to cough. It was some time before he thought it necessary to make any reply. When he did, he said —

“ My dear Gypsy, you don’t understand

about these things. You are a girl. Fellows at college have plenty to think of, but then I don't expect to — forget you exactly — no." And the wonderful part of it was that Tom had to get up and walk down the yard again.

"I hope you won't get hazed," said Gypsy, presently. Tom's young eyes flashed.

"I should like to see them try it, that's all ! I'd shoot the first man that touched me. The only thing is, father wont let me have a revolver, which I think is rough on the Trojans."

"Can't he afford it?"

"Oh, I guess so. But he's afraid I should shoot myself, or something, I don't know what. As if I weren't old enough to take care of myself !"

"I hope you'll have a nice time," said Gypsy, thinking best to change the subject.

"Of course I shall ; a regular jolly. I haven't looked forward to college all my life for nothing. I mean to get all the fun I can out of it."

“ How splendid it’ll be ! I wish *I* could go. But then you go to study, you know, father says, and mother too.”

“ Oh, study, yes, of course,” said Tom carelessly ; “ but I mean to have a good time *anyway*.”

Gypsy looked a little troubled. She knew how Tom felt, and she was so sure that she should feel exactly the same way if she were in his place, that she had not the conscience to scold him ; at the same time, she doubted if he were quite right about it. She had a dim idea that when people went to college “ just for fun,” they did not come out of it quite as good as they went in ; a flitting thought of Francis Rowe ; a shudder at the bare possibility that her brother should ever be like Sarah’s. This may have had something to do with her answer ; for she said, speaking low and earnestly —

“ Tom, do you remember my saying, out in the boat, that I wished you had something to *start on* ? ”

“I guess so.”

“Well, I do wish just that. I can’t explain, — I never can explain things, you know, Tom; but I’ve got an idea there somewhere, now really.” This with a curious, piquant look, half laughing, half sober. Tom saw the sober part of it, and answered accordingly.

“I suppose you mean what people call principle, only you don’t know what you’re driving at. You don’t think I’m such a horrible sinner, do you, Gypsy?”

“No, Tom, — why no!”

“Well, I guess I’m about as good as most fellows, am I not?”

“Better!” said Gypsy, vehemently; “ever so much better. Why, I don’t know any other boy in Yorkbury half as good as you!”

“Well, then, I guess you needn’t trouble about me,” said Tom. Gypsy looked puzzled and made no reply. Presently she pulled something out of her pocket.

“ Tom, dear ? ”

Tom looked up and saw a broad blue ribbon studded at each end with heavy silver crosses ; in the centre a strip of silver card-board on which was the one word “ Gypsy ” sewed in Gypsy’s own bright hair.

“ I don’t know that you’ll care anything about it, but it was all I could make that was all my own. I tried a lot of things, and spoilt them. That’s my hair, and if you see any little frizzled ends, you needn’t look, — such a time as I had with them, and they *would* keep sticking out ! ”

“ That’s prime,” said Tom, turning it about in his fingers as if he were hunting for a handle to take hold by. “ What is it — a neck-tie ? ”

“ Neck-tie ! Tom Breynton ! Don’t you know book-marks when you see them ? ”

“ Oh, a book-mark, is it ? Very good. Thanks are due. Where shall I put it, in my Homer or Latin Prose ? ”

"It's for — your Bible," said Gypsy, hesitating. She wanted to add, "And if you would only please to read it every night, Tom." But she did not. Can you guess why, girls? Because she could not ask of him what she did not do herself? Exactly. I wonder if you think she felt just then a little sorry — or not.

What she did not say, I am inclined to think that his mother did ; for after he had gone to his room, they had a long talk together, and when it was over, and Tom was left to himself, he hid his head under the bed-clothes and was still a marvellously long time.

The cold gray light of Monday morning woke Gypsy from a dream that President Woolsey had expelled Tom from college for not reading the Bible. She started up to find that it was a quarter past five, and Tom was already up and eating his breakfast.

How short that breakfast seemed ; how strange the early light ; how odd the merry

singing of the birds ! Gypsy wondered if they did not know that Tom was going, and what they could possibly find to be so happy about. Going — really going ; it seemed like part of her night's dream ; she sat watching Tom's face, his merry lips and faint moustache, his handsome eyes and curling hair, just as one would look at a picture that one was going to burn up. Half laughing, half crying, she packed up his luncheon, and stuffed his pockets with golden pears, and jumped on his trunks while he strapped them down, and listened to the coach rumbling up, and then she ran out into the yard and turned her back to everybody.

“ Good-by, mother. Yes, my money's all right, father. Here, Winnie, give us a kiss, sir. Patty, you there ? Good-by to you all. I'll write as soon as I get there. The small trunk, John, in the entry — all right ! Now, Gypsy, Gypsy ! Where is the child ? ”

Her arms were round his neck, and her head

was on his shoulder ; she followed him out to the gate, kissing and clinging to him, quite determined not to cry, and making up by the means, a series of horrible faces.

“ Oh, Tom, what shall I do without you ? what *shall* I do ? ”

“ Shake Winnie and break lamp-chimneys,” began Tom, after his usual style ; but choked and stopped short.

“ I don’t know what a fellow’s going to do without *you*, Gypsy,”—gave her a great hug, jumped on the box with John, and never looked back.

Gypsy watched the coach rumble away, grow dim in the clouds of dust, grow small, grow less, become a speck, vanish utterly. Then she went into Tom’s desolate room, bare of its familiar pictures, books, and clothes, strange and cold for want of the merry eyes, the ringing laugh, the eager step that had belonged to it and been a part of it since the boy was a baby.

She locked the door, sat down on a heap of old newspapers in the middle of the floor, and did what Gypsy very seldom did, — cried as hard as she could cry.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST LETTER.

TOM took two days to reach New Haven, stopping over Monday night at an uncle's in Springfield. On Tuesday night at seven o'clock, he was sitting in his room alone, feeling, to tell the truth — well, we won't say homesick, but something very much like it. His chum was gone out, though that was no great loss, for the boy was a comparative stranger to him; they had seen each other for the first time, when they came to be examined in the summer, and had engaged rooms together because it happened to be convenient; Hall took, as every one did, a fancy to Tom at first sight, and both being tired out

with tramping after boarding-places, they had met in Elm Street, found just such rooms as they wanted, and were glad enough to unite their fortunes for the sake of getting them.

Tom had reached New Haven in the afternoon, unpacked his trunks, put away his clothes and books, hung his pictures, bargained with his landlady for the luxury of a chair with four legs (there being none in the room possessed of more than two or three), gone to supper at his club and come home again; he had read a newspaper, and dusted off his table, arranged and re-arranged his books, eaten some of his mother's pears, looked his photograph album through three times from beginning to end, rather wished he could look into the windows at home and see what they were all doing, and now he was tipped back in his chair, — the four-legged one, — against the wall, wishing that he knew what to do next, and that it would not have such a way of growing dark early.

For some reason, — whether there could have been any homesickness about it or not we will not undertake to decide, — the solitude and the gathering twilight grew at last intolerable. He brought his chair down with a jerk, tossed on his cap, and started out for a walk. He strolled along past the colleges, and under the elms, hanging somewhat yellow and sere now in their tossing, netted arches, tried to look at the Sophomores as if he thought them no better than himself, did not succeed very well, wished he were through Freshman year, and finally, by way of something to do, decided to run down to the office. Not that there would be anything there for him ; of course there was no chance of that, though he wished there were, sadly enough ; but he would go down just for the fun of the thing. So he went, and carelessly ran his eye over the list of advertised letters, through the As and Bs, and was just turning away when, lo and behold ! — “ Breynton, Thomas.”

“ Not from home so soon, surely,” thought Tom. But it was from home, directed in Gypsy’s hand, — and the hand, by the way, was very much like Gypsy ; sharp and decided, and adorned with various little piquant flourishes, but with a remarkable tendency to run over the line and under the line, and everywhere but *on* the line, and not entirely guiltless of blots, — to Thomas Brevnton, Esq., Freshman, Yale College, New Haven, Conn., U. S. A., North America, Western Hemisphere.”

“ The rogue ! ” said Tom between his teeth, as he took it from the hand of the laughing clerk ; “ I guess she’ll get her pay for this.”

Hall met him on the steps as he passed out tearing open the envelope in a great hurry :

“ I say, Breynton, hilloa ! That you ? Come over to the Tontine with a fellow.”

The Tontine was no place for Tom and he knew it. Whether he would have preferred it to his lonely room and the dreary, gathering twi-

light, if it had not been for that letter, I cannot say. But at any rate, Hall had this for an answer :

"No, thank you. I have something else to do. Don't you wish you had a sister to write to you the day you leave, sir?"

"Don't know but I do," said Hall, looking on rather wistfully. Tom walked off radiant.

The dreary twilight was dreary no longer ; the dark and lonely rooms seemed all at once like home. He lighted his lamp, tipped back his chair, and read as fast as most college boys read their first letter from home, I fancy :

MONDAY, September the something or other, }
One o'clock P. M., in my room, on the bed. }

BEST BELOVED OF THOMASES : —

Here you've been gone only seven hours, and I have so much to say I can't begin to say it and it isn't of any use and I don't know what I'll do when you've been gone a week only I've asked father to bring me up a ream of paper

from the store because I know I shall use as much as that before you get home.

Oh, dear ! I haven't put in a scrap of punctuation in that long sentence, only one funny little comma that looks exactly like a pol—polly— how do you spell polliwog ? — at the beginning ; and I never could correct it in the world, for I shouldn't have a sign of an idea what belonged where. I'm going to put in a lot ; of semi-colons ; along here to ; make up ;

What do you suppose ? — Miss Cardrew asked Fanny French to-day what a semi-colon was, and she said she believed it was a place where ministers went to school. Did you ever ? I laughed till I choked, and was just as red in the beet as a face — I mean — well, you change it round right yourself ; I can't stop. Then Miss Cardrew told me I'd laughed enough, and that made me laugh all the harder, and Delia Guest, she went into a coniption, — you know she always does when anything happens, anyway, — and we had the greatest time you ever knew.

But, then, this isn't the beginning, and I meant

to commence there. I always do jump at things so.

You see, after you'd gone, I just went into your room and — don't you tell, will you? but I did — I cried like a little goose. You'd better believe your table looked homesick enough, and your closet with nothing but your linen coat hanging up. I banged the door to, I got so mad looking at it.

Ow! look at that blot. I was only just shaking my pen round a little to get off some of the ink. I never! if it hasn't gone *all over the bed-quilt!* I got up here to write because it's easier, and then — well, somehow, my chairs are always filled up with things. What *do* you suppose mother'll say? Isn't it a shame?

Well, after I thought I'd cried enough, you know, Winnie'd been banging at the door so long I thought I'd let him in, and you ought to have seen him! He had on one of your old coats that mother gave to Patty to give to her cousin's husband that has the consumption, and he'd corked a moustache that went clear out to

his ears, and then he had a Mother Goose under his arm ; said he was going to be Tom now, and have his room, and study Aunt Abbieses (I suppose he meant *Anabasis*) ; he didn't wish to be disturbed ; I might go away so he could lock the door.

Well, you see that made me laugh, only it would have been just as easy to cry again, and mother was wiping her eyes, and father was coughing and looking round, and so I went out doors to see if I couldn't laugh some way. It is so horrid not to feel like laughing, isn't it ?

Then Sarah Rowe came over, and she didn't seem to mind it a bit because Francis was gone ; but then she says he's been gone so much, now it is Sophomore year. I wonder if I shan't mind it by the time you're a Soph. She says I shan't, but I don't believe any such a thing. Then you see I just felt as if I *must* have a good time somehow, and the kitty came out, and we all went to playing, and I got into Mrs. Surly's yard before I thought. You know I never *do* think, anyway. So you see the puppy he came out and he

went at the cat, and she put up her back and ran off mewing, and he after her, and I after both of them. That dog he wrung a cat's neck once, and I wasn't going to have him wringing ours, so I never thought, and she put down into the cellar kitchen, and I went too, and I never looked nor anything, and I went *splash!* into Mrs. Surly's tub of starch, and over it went, all on me, and the floor, and the cat, and the puppy, and Mrs. Surly.

Well, it wasn't very hot, and we weren't anybody burnt very much but the puppy, and good enough for him, but I thought I should *go off* laughing, and you ought to have heard Mrs. Surly scold. She should like to know if *that* was the way my ma brought me up, and if I didn't know children ought to be at their book instead of tumbling down their neighbors' cellars and upsetting their neighbors' starch, and burning their neighbors' dogs, and she should tell my ma of me and my conduct before the sun went down.

So what should she do but come marching over just before dinner, with the longest lingo,

but of course I'd told mother all about it beforehand, and she tried to look sober and tell me I must be careful, but I could see her laughing right out of her eyes the whole time.

We had mince pie for dinner, and I missed you more than ever. How you did use to pull out the raisins ! We had some tomatoes too.

Oh, Tom, I *do* miss you ! Everybody sends a world of love. I've been counting the weeks till you come home. You have the nicest part of it. It's always harder to stay at home and think about it than it is to go off and do it, I think.

It does seem to me as if I thought about you all the time pretty much. If you were to be such a boy as Francis Rowe, I believe I shouldn't know anything what to do.

How horrid it would be if you were to learn to swear. Please don't. But of course you wouldn't.

Write me all about the Sophs, and who gets hazed, and everything. I should think it would be perfectly mag, to go to college. I think it's real mean girls can't.

Wouldn't it be nice if you could peep in the door now, and let me hug you?

Your very loving

GYPSY."

"P. S. I send a blue neck-tie. I meant to get it done before you went, but I didn't. I sewed on it some in school, and Miss Cardrew made me lose my recess for it — just like her! Blue is real becoming to you, you know. You used to look dreadfully handsome in the other; something like — well, like Haroun Alraschid, I think; then sometimes like Major Winthrop. The girls used to go crazy over his photograph, because it did look so much like you. They haven't any of *them* got such a brother, and I guess they know it. Why, if there isn't another blot, and I haven't any more idea how it came there than Adam.

G."

On Friday night, as Gypsy was passing her father's store on the way home from school, Mr. Simms, the clerk, came to the door and called her.

“Here’s a letter for you, Miss Gypsy ; it came in with the rest after your father had gone up to the house. It’s a — really a very peculiar looking letter. But then there always *is* something peculiar about you, you know, my dear.”

“Oh, thank you, Mr. Simms — yes, I know I’m always doing things out of the way, but — dear me ! I never did ! Did you ever ? That old Tom ! Why, what *did* the post-man say ?”

Tom had certainly “paid her” richly. The letter was enclosed in a flaring crimson envelope, conspicuous anywhere, especially so at Yorkbury where crimson envelopes were few and far between, and it bore this inscription :

“To Miss Jemima Breynton, R. R. Terror of puppies and elderly ladies. Enemy-in-especial to starch-tubs and study-hours. Enemy-in-general to the peace and order of society in
Yorkbury, Vermont.”

“I have been wondering what R. R. could possibly stand for, my dear,” observed Mr. Simms, mildly.

"Oh, that's a secret between Tom and me," said Gypsy, between her shouts of laughter, and started for home on the run, to show the letter to her mother.

If any reader should share Mr. Simms's curiosity to such an extent as to suffer seriously from loss of sleep or appetite, he is hereby confidentially referred to the first volume of Gypsy's history for a solution of the mystery.

I think it necessary to say, however, for the sake of my reputation as a historian, that this misdirecting of letters is a sorry joke, with about as much wit in it as there is apt to be in young people's fun, and that I am not giving my sanction to any such lawless proceedings.

The letter, though so obviously directed to Gypsy, contained only a slip for her; the note itself was for her mother.

"A letter from Tom! a letter from Tom! a letter from *Tom!*" shouted Gypsy, rushing into the house. "Mother, do come and read it, for

I'm in such a hurry to hear. Mother, father, all of you!"

And all of them came, down to Winnie with his hands and mouth full of bread and butter, and Patty, with broom and duster.

"How soon he has written — the dear boy!" said his mother, flushing with pleasure, and read aloud to a breathless audience:

"MY DEAR MOTHER:

I reached here safely Tuesday p. m.; had a jolly time Monday night at Uncle Jeb's; he has a decidedly pretty daughter, and I want her asked up to Yorkbury some vacation.

Old Yale seems to conduct herself with propriety, and is not, *mirabile dictu*, ("His old Latin!" put in Gypsy), quite as much impressed by the arrival and presence of your distinguished son as might naturally be expected, and would certainly be becoming in her. It's rather a jump from graduating at Yorkbury and feeling yourself of some importance, to being nothing but a

"little Freshy," and being treated by those unutterable Sophs as if you were a lower order of animal, somewhere in the region of the oyster ; at any rate, something to which the gorilla would be a Milton. I met Francis Rowe on Chapel Street last night, and he cut me dead ; took no more notice of me than if he'd never heard of such a being. That's the way they all do. You'll say it's ridiculous and ungentlemanly, and I suppose it is ; but boys will be boys, and college boys never think about being gentlemen, as far as I see. It doesn't strike me now that I shall do so when I'm a Soph ; but there's no telling.

They're hazing like everything this year. Nobody has touched me, and I should like to see them try it, though a lot of them came into our house last night. We had all of us sat up till midnight expecting them, and were all ready. They banged open the door, and went into one of the fellows' room, and set him up on a stove, and made him make a speech. Then they broke open his trunk, and tossed out all his things, and

made him drink about half a pint of vinegar and pepper. That's very mild treatment, however; in the proper sense of the word, it isn't "hazing" unless you have your head shaved, or are ducked to death under a pump, or taken out of bed and thrown out of a second-story window into a snow-bank.

Hall and I have each of us bought a good-sized billy, and we haven't the slightest objections to using them if occasion requires. I don't believe we shall be touched.

Am having a jolly time; study comes a little rough at first, though. I should like to look in at home a minute, well enough. Love to father and Winnie and all. My *respectful regards* to Patty. Will write to father next week.

Your pears and doughnuts taste good, I tell you. I say, little mother, I wonder if there are many fellows have just such a mother as you.

Tom."

"P. S. While I write, some Sophs going by are hollering — "Put out that light, Freshy! Fresh,

put out that light, I say—quick!" Freshy does *not* put it out, and there come two stones bang against my window. You're pretty good-looking, but you can't come in, — the blinds are **shut.**"

"What's on your slip of paper, Gypsy?" they all asked, after the letter was read and discussed.

"Oh, nothing much," said Gypsy, folding it up and putting it in her pocket. This was what was on it :

"DEAR GYP:—

Since you are interested in the fancy department, I hope you will be pleased with the accompanying envelope.

Thanks for the neck-tie; it is becoming, of course. Do I ever wear anything that isn't, my dear? Your letter was prime, and came in the nick of time. (N. B. I am aspiring to the position of class poet, and this is by way of practice.)

Don't you tell, it will bother father, and mother will look so sober, but I made a pretty bad fizzle in Homer to-day ; don't know how it came about exactly, but it was too warm to study, and last night there were some fellows in. A fizzle you know isn't as bad as a flunk ; that's when you can't say anything. I stumbled through some, and made up some more ; but somehow it didn't hang together very well. Mean to make a rush to-morrow, and make up for it. Be a good little girl. Try Mrs. Surly's puppy with a lucifer match, — light it right under his nose, and see if he doesn't jump.

T."

Awhile after the letter came, Gypsy silently stole away and out of the house

"Where are you going ?" called her mother ;
"it's almost tea-time."

"I'll be back soon," said Gypsy. "I'm going to run down to Peace Maythorne's a minute."

"I suppose she's gone to tell her about Tom's

letter," observed her mother, smiling; "it is strange how that child goes to Peace when anything happens; if she's very glad or very sorry, Peace must know all about it."

"It is strange, and Peace is so poor, and has no education either, Mary," said Mr. Breynton, musingly; "you're not afraid of her getting any harm, my dear?"

His wife laughed.

"Harm from Peace Maythorne! She's one of Gypsy's greatest blessings; she acts like a balance-wheel on all the child's fly-away notions. Besides, she is not exactly uneducated; suffering teaches deeper and better than books, sometimes. Poor thing!"

"The doctors can never do anything for her, I suppose?"

"Oh, no."

Gypsy meantime was making her way as Gypsy almost always made her way — on the hop, skip, and jump — down through the

crowded, wretched streets which led to Peace Maythorne's home. It seems rather hard, perhaps, to talk about a *home*, when one has nothing but a weary bed in one bare room, and a slow life of pain and utter dependence. Very hard, Gypsy used to think it was ; the mournfulness and the pity of it grew into her love for this crippled girl, and made of it something very tender, very reverent ; quite unlike her love for any of the strong, comfortable, happy girls at school. Unconsciously, too, she grew herself more gentle, more thoughtful, the more she saw of Peace.

The very door of that hushed and lonely room she opened as Gypsy never opened doors anywhere else, — softly.

Peace turned her quiet face over on the pillow in surprise that afternoon, at the sight of her standing by the bed.

“ Why, how still you must have been ! I didn’t hear you come in at all.”

"Do you want me? I suppose I do tire you to death."

"Want you? Oh, I am so *glad*!"

"That's nice," said Gypsy, in her honest fashion; "I do so love to have people glad to see me."

The sunlight which flooded the room fell all over Peace; her face in it looked pitifully thin and pale; paler than usual, though smiling as it always was, and quiet.

"What's the matter?" said Gypsy abruptly, looking down on it.

"Matter? Oh, nothing. Did I say anything was the matter?"

"No, you never do. But something is. What has happened?"

"I didn't sleep much, — well, not any, last night, that's all. Come, Gypsy, let's not talk about me."

"But what kept you awake?" persisted Gypsy. Peace made no reply.

“ Peace, I do believe it was your aunt ! ”

Peace colored painfully, but she would not speak. Just what the girl had to bear in her orphaned, dependent life, probably no one ever knew. This was sure, — the physical suffering was the least of it. Yet the woman to whose charge her weakness and her pain were left, was never consciously unkind to her brother’s child ; she was one of those people — and their name is Legion — who “ *mean well*,” but “ *don’t know how*.”

“ What has she been saying to you ? ” said Gypsy, in a savage undertone.

“ Oh, nothing much ; she came home tired, and of course she couldn’t help wishing I could work, and — Gypsy, I don’t want to talk about it. She didn’t know I cared. She is very good. She put my tea back on the stove this morning because it was so weak the first time ; she did, really, Gypsy.”

“ She’d have been a heathen if she hadn’t ! ”

exploded Aunt Jane's sworn enemy. Peace understood that it was all for love of her, but it gave her more pain than help when Gypsy talked like this. She laid her hands down in Gypsy's in a weak, appealing way, and said —

“ Gypsy — *please!* ” and Gypsy stopped short; only tapping her foot angrily on the floor.

“ If you would only talk about yourself! ” said Peace.

“ That's what I always do when I get with you. Then if I say anything else, I say it all wrong, and I don't see that I'm any good anyway. I believe I'll get a piece of court plaster and paste it over my mouth, and then the world will be so much the safer.”

“ But you had something to say when you came in, ” said Peace, smiling; “ I saw it in your eyes. What is that, — from your brother? ”

Gypsy answered by unfolding the slip of

paper and giving it to Peace. Whether it was quite right to show to any one else what Tom was not willing that his mother should see, she never stopped to think. She had no secrets from Peace Maythorne. If this were to be, as she vaguely felt that it might be, the first of many others like it, she felt sure that she never could keep them from her. Fortunately, Peace was the very model of a confidante ; as kindly and inviting as a spring sunbeam ; as dumb as a statue.

Peace read it and laid it down.

“ Well ? ” said Gypsy.

“ I don’t know ; ought you to show me this ? ”

“ Oh, Tom wouldn’t care ; you’re not like anybody else. He knows I tell you everything. What do you think ? ”

“ I am a little sorry. But then all boys will have bad lessons sometimes, you know.”

“ Tom *ought* not to,” said Gypsy, with a little

flash of pride. "He might have been the first scholar in his class here, instead of the sixth; Mr. Guernsey said so. There's no need of his doing so!"

Peace twisted the paper about her fingers, thinking.

"You see I felt sort of sorry," said Gypsy, "and so I thought if I came and told you, I'd feel better. But there, I don't see that I can help it."

"You might say something about it when you write."

"What? He's so much older, I can't play grandmother and preach to Tom. If I do, he catches me up in his arms and runs all round the house with me, and as likely as not leaves me up on a closet shelf or out on top of the wood-pile, and that's all the answer I get!"

"You needn't preach. Say just what you said to me, and no more,—I'm sorry."

"Um — well, I don't know but you're right. I'll think about it."

CHAPTER IV.

THE OUTLINE OF A SHADOW.

ONE gets used to anything, and after a while Gypsy became used to Tom's being away. It took a few weeks, to be sure ; the first twilights were very dreary without him, the first bright mornings empty and cold ; the first few Sunday nights it was exceedingly easy to cry ; then all the fun seemed to have dropped out of boat-rides and nutting-parties ; hay-cocks and wood-piles were a mockery ; there was a sting in the sight of the very cat, now that there was no one to tie tin dippers to her tail and make her walk through stove-pipes. But after a while, it came to seem a matter of course that there should be no Tom about ;

strange, sometimes, to think that it had ever been otherwise ; though his handsome, merry face was just as often in her thoughts, he himself just as dear. Then there were the letters. And such letters ! Eight, ten, twelve pages twice a week, from Gypsy to Tom. A full sheet hurried over in study hours, once a week from Tom to Gypsy, which was more than she expected, and certainly, considering how many letters Tom had to write, was a great deal. This was for the first three weeks. The fourth week Sarah Rowe had a birthday party, and Gypsy was so busy festooning a new white dress with little knots of blue ribbon that she only wrote to Tom once, and a scrap of a note at that. The fifth week Tom did not write at all. Somehow or other it came about after this that Gypsy — “ well, she *meant* to send off her letters regularly, of course ; but something was always happening just at the time she wanted to write, and then she was always losing

the mails, and one time she had her letter all written and ready, and Winnie dropped it into the well, and — well, you needn't laugh ; she would write three times next week and make up. But writing letters was horrid work, and there wasn't half as much to say as there was at first ; besides, she always blotted her fingers so."

Indeed she had — like a few other sisters — been more negligent about it than she supposed. She had occasion afterwards to be very sorry.

Tom said little about himself to any one, in his letters home. They all noticed that, as the term went on. His letters were very short, very funny, very much like Tom ; they gave accounts of the hazing, his last quarrel with his landlady, the Tutor's Latest, how the Sophs were beaten at the last "rush," how hard the seats were at the Chapel, what a pretty girl he saw on Temple Street yesterday, how many weeks there were to the end of the term, and how glad he should be when it was over. But

they heard little about his studies ; scarcely anything of the friends he made. His chum was referred to often, but it was usually " Hall was out late last night and woke me up coming in ; " or, " Hall is waiting for me to go out with him ; " or, " Hall is bothering me to translate his Homer for him, and I don't know any more about it than he does ; " sometimes, " Hall is a jolly fellow, but he isn't your style exactly, mother." His mother's face saddened sometimes as she folded the letters, but she never said why.

So the term passed on, and all thoughts of Tom merged at last into a happy looking to its end. He would be here in five weeks ; he would be here in four ; the four slipped into three ; the three滑 into two ; the two were one before they knew it. Ah, it was pleasant enough to have only days to count.

" I feel precisely like an India-rubber ball," said Gypsy, confidentially, to Peace.

" An India-rubber ball ! "

“Yes; I want to be on the bounce all the time, and I can’t keep still to save me. I’ve upset three tumblers of water, two ink-bottles, and a milk-pitcher, to-day, jumping round, besides throwing a snow-ball smash! through Mrs. Surly’s kitchen window. Just think, Peace, of having your brother come home to be hugged and kissed, in just four days!”

Peace thought, perhaps, more than Gypsy meant her to. She did not say “I haven’t *anybody* to kiss. Oh, Gypsy! God has given you so much — so much, and me so little.” She did not say this. Peace never complained; seldom talked about herself. Gypsy’s joy was her joy, and she answered with her bright, still smile, and eyes that were glad for Gypsy’s sake. But something in the quiet eyes, — a faint, flitting shadow, — Peace could not help it, — made Gypsy stop with some merry words unspoken on her lips, and throw her arms around her neck, and say: --

"Oh, Peace, I never thought! Mayn't I love you enough to make up?"

And a while after, knotting her merry brows as if over a great new puzzle that she should be much obliged to anybody for answering —

"I should like to know, Peace Maythorne, what makes all the good people have the troubles, and horrid, ugly, wicked people like me, that scold, and get mad, and forget their prayers, and all, live along just like one of those funny little round sunbeams coming in there through the hole in the curtain!"

"Sometimes I can't see anything but a piece of gray cloud through the curtain," said Peace, half to herself.

"Sunbeams don't last forever — no," said Gypsy, musing a little. "I wonder how they feel rainy days."

At this she jumped up with a shiver and ran home.

They were busy days, — these last before

Tom came. "We must have some lemon pies ; Tom likes them," said his mother. "I'm going to make him a new neck-tie," said Gypsy, "and put it in his bureau drawer, and let him find it." "Tom's comin' home, and I'm goin' to hang his room up with lots of pictures," said Winnie, and one day, when nobody was there, in he went with mucilage and scissors, and pasted a bewilderment of mad dogs, passenger cars, steamboats, hair-oil advertisements, and other interesting selections from the newspapers, all over the pretty pink rose-buds that covered the walls.

But the last day came, as all last days come, and the early December twilight fell in upon as pretty and cosey and eager a group as any college boy need desire to find waiting for him on his first coming home. The fire — a wood-fire, for it had such a cheerful look, Mr. Breynton said, — was flaring and snapping and crackling in the parlor grate ; the bright curtains were

drawn aside so that Tom could see the light shining far down the road ; the door open into the dining-room where the tea-table was set and the silver was flashing ; a tempting odor of unknown deliciousness — drop-cakes, perhaps, or creamy Jenny Lind, — stealing in from the kitchen. They were all gathered in the parlor now, listening for the coach ; the mother sitting quietly by the fire ; the father pacing the room a little nervously ; Gypsy perched on one window-sill and Winnie on the other, with their noses flattened on the glass ; and Patty's head pushed in every now and then through the dining-room door to keep a sort of angelic watch over things in general.

“ *I should* like to know how you can ! ” broke out Gypsy all at once, turning her eyes away from the window to snap them at her mother.

“ How I can what ? ”

“ Sit still,—in a chair, just as if Tom weren't coming, and — *knit* ! ”

“When you get to be as old as I am, perhaps you will find out,” said her mother, smiling.

“It’s time for the boy to be here,” said Mr. Breynton, making a third at the windows, shading his eyes from the light.

“I hope he wont get chilled riding up ; it’s a cold night.”

“I would have taken Billy and gone down for him, only the coach is so much warmer. There’s a fire in his room, I suppose ?”

“Oh, yes ; Gypsy built it herself.”

“I guess I did. I filled the stove almost to the top with pine knots ; Tom always likes pine knots.”

“I stuffed in free newspapers,” put in Winnie, anxious for a share of the honors ; “free gre-at big newspapers ‘n some shavings. Besides, I drew in lots of matches, — they make such funny little blue blazes. You can play Fourth o’ July as well as anything.”

"Hark!" said Gypsy. They all tried to listen, but Gypsy jumped down from the window-sill, knocked over three chairs and a cricket, and was out of the door and down the yard before they knew what she was about.

"Sleigh-bells, sleigh-bells! The coach! He's coming, coming, *coming*! I see the top of his head, and the trunk, and — Oh, Thom-as Breynton!"

And her head was on his shoulder, her arms about his neck, before the rest were down the steps.

"This is something like," said Tom, when supper was over and they were all sitting around the parlor fire; "haven't seen a wood-fire since I went away."

"How does your stove work?" asked his father.

"Oh, well enough, — when it doesn't smoke, and I don't forget to put the coal on."

"I used to think sometimes how you were

sitting down evenings and looking into the fire," said Gypsy climbing into his lap; she thought she should never be too large to climb into Tom's lap.

"Did you?" said Tom, with a queer laugh; "well, you had your trouble for nothing. I was out with Hall mostly evenings."

"What about the study-hours?" asked Mr. Breynton.

"Oh, we don't have study-hours at college. I did the studying round generally when I felt like it. Some jolly good times I had though!"

His father and mother exchanged glances.

"I do believe you've grown tall," said Gypsy, nestling closer to him.

"You have, you mean. People of my age don't grow tall in three months."

"Grandfather! O-oh, just look at your moustache!"

"I should be happy to oblige you, but owing to a natural inability to see my mouth — "

"But how it has grown! I never saw it till just this minute, in the light. I never! I guess the Yorkbury girls will rave about your coming back with it."

Handsome Tom drew his forefinger complacently across the ambitious silky line of darkness which just escaped looking like a *crock*, and seemed to think this very likely.

"Conceited fellow! You don't deserve a sister to praise you up. But then it is so becoming!" giving him a little squeeze to emphasize her words.

"Gypsy, Gypsy! you will certainly spoil him."

"Not I. He's past that. Now Tom, you may just begin and tell me all about that funny little fellow with red hair they hazed so, and that time you grabbed Tutor somebody or other in the rush, and then—Oh, what did your landlady's daughter do about the brass ring, and —"

“ Thomas,” interrupted his father, who had been pacing the room uneasily ever since the remark about study-hours, “ you haven’t told us anything about your rank. You know I wrote a great many times about it, but you never took the least notice. You took oration stand at least, I hope ? ”

“ Confound it ! ” said Tom, reddening suddenly, “ do let the studies alone, please father. A fellow gets enough of them in term-time.”

Tom was easily vexed by his father, but very seldom disrespectful to him. At Mr. Breyneton’s reproof everybody was still, and at the silence Tom colored again for shame.

“ Well, I didn’t mean just that, sir ; but I don’t suppose I took the stand you expected of me, and I’ve been so bored with books and lessons, I can’t bear the sound of them.”

“ I don’t think you’ve done right, Tom, not to keep me acquainted with your rank through

the term," began Mr. Breynton, but was stopped by a quiet, appealing look from his wife. If Tom deserved a reprimand, she felt that this was no time to give it. Her way would have been to wait till she was alone with him, and he was willing to enter into a quiet, reasonable talk. But her husband, worried and nervous, kept on, as worried and nervous people will, making a bad matter very much worse, because he had not the self-control or the tact to let it drop.

"No, my dear, the amount of it is, he has been idling away his time, and he ought to be told of it, and after all the care and expense we've been to — "

Just there, there was a shriek from Winnie, which the power fails me to describe.

"Ow ! oh ! ugh ! the old thing ! Le' go of me-e-e ! Gypsy's ticklin' me ; she's dropped a cent down my neck, and it's co-old ! "

"Couldn't help it, dear, possibly, — such a chance ! Stand up and jump till it drops out,—

there ! Now, Tom, tell us about the goose they shut up in Prof. Hadley's desk ; wasn't it Prof. Hadley ? Come, father, I know you want to hear about it, and then you know you can tell about the Euclid proposition you tried to make up when you were in college ; I always do like to hear that."

Gypsy's mother looked up over her knitting with a quick, searching glance. She did not quite understand. Was this a bit of childish fun and chatter and hurry to get away from a grave subject ? Or was it a piece of womanly strategy, new and strange in Gypsy, sprung out of a perception of trouble as new and strange ? She had not seen Tom's eyes flash, and his lips shut while his father spoke, — she had not quite dared to look ; neither had she seen Gypsy start and quiver in his arms ; but she drew her own conclusions.

The college stories filled up the rest of the evening, and there was no more trouble To

see Gypsy's eyes twinkle, and the dimples dance all over her face, and to hear her laugh ringing out above all the rest (Gypsy's laugh always reminded one of fountains, and cascades, and little brooks), one would never have guessed what she had found out that evening ; it had come in the flash of a moment ; in a moment she seemed to understand, and wondered that she had not understood before, all the rubs and jars that were coming between Tom and his father, all the misery of them and the wrong. More than this and worse than this, came a dim, doubtful suspicion of Tom. *Could* it be that he had not done just right in this long college term ? Could *Tom* be to blame for anything ?

This was the first faint outline of the first shadow of Gypsy's life.

Tom was tired with his journey and started early to bed.

“ And not a thing unpacked ? ” said Gypsy.
“ I'll go up with you.”

“That trunk isn’t packed — well, not exactly after the patterns,” said Tom, shutting the door. Gypsy had the straps unfastened before he could get there to help her, and threw open the trunk, and uttered a little scream.

“O-oh! Why, I never! Who ever saw such a looking muss? Why Tom Breynton!”

“Why, that’s nothing,” said Tom. “I smoothed it all over on top so as not to frighten the soul out of mother’s body; you ought to see the strata underneath; that’s something like. You see I was in such a thundering hurry — ”

“Tom!”

“Well, such a hanged hurry, if you like it better.”

“But I don’t like it letter. It isn’t wicked, of course, nor anything like that, only — well, you used to talk like a gentleman before you went to college.”

“And now I don’t? Thank you, ma’am. Well, the fact is, a fellow doesn’t have much

time to be a gentleman in college. If he gets through and saves his soul, he does well."

Tom did not say these words lightly, but in a changed, serious tone, with a sudden flash of trouble in his eyes. Gypsy turned to answer him, letting the cover of the trunk fall in her haste, some eager words upon her lips. Whatever they were, Tom saw them coming.

"There! look out; didn't that go on your hand? I thought it certainly had; you must be careful or you'll chop off all your fingers. As I was about to observe, my dear, when you were so impolite as to interrupt me by criticising my syntax, I was in such a — hem! such a hurry that I tossed things in as they came, and at that, I didn't get the trunk locked till the porter was dragging it down the last stair. Look out for the ink-bottles. My prophetic soul tells me there are several lying round loose there somewhere."

"I should think so! Look here, -- a pile

of clean shirts with two boots and a rubber, *without* any paper, right on top of them, and — oh, a bottle of mucilage tipped right into your box of paper collars ! Just see that jelly tumbler stuck on your best vest ! What's this in the middle of the pile of handkerchiefs, — a *blacking-box* ! Oh, Tom, your Bible, — that's too bad ! All scratched up with the clasp of your photograph album. Mother'll be so sorry, and — oh, dear *me* ! *Look* at the broken glass and the ink, and the neck-ties — *swimming* ! ”

“ Well,” said Tom, looking rather subdued, “ most of it's gone into that pasteboard box ; sponge it up quick, before mother sees. Bother it all ! If I were an ink-bottle, I shouldn't see any particular occasion for tipping over. Hand me the towel, or the pillow-case, or something. Newspaper doesn't get it up half as quick ! --- well, there, we're all right now.”

“ I should think you'd taken a great spoon and stirred the trunk up like hasty pudding,”

said Gypsy, trying to look severe, but laughing from eyes, mouth, and dimples. "Oh, what are those books? Greek Lexicon — Euclid? What do you want of those in vacation?"

"To make little girls ask questions," said Tom, evasively.

"Oh, what a pretty dark-blue book, with Harper down at the bottom, — let me see; what's the name?"

Tom took, — no, I am afraid he snatched it from her.

"Let alone, Gypsy! You bother me, touching my things."

And at that he put it in his bureau drawer and locked it up. Gypsy said nothing, but she thought much.

Presently, in hunting for his dressing-case, they came across something, dark, ill-smelling, and ugly-looking. Gypsy took it up with an exclamation.

"Oh," said Tom, carelessly, "some of Hall's cigars."

“ Hall’s ? ”

“ Yes, — that is to say, they were his once. He gave them to me on a bet one day.”

“ And you haven’t used them. I’m so glad. You don’t smoke, of course.”

“ Where is that shaving-brush ? ” said Tom.

When Gypsy left him for the night, she clung to him a little, her face hidden :

“ Oh, Tom, it is so good to get you back. And, Tom, dear, if you’d come back anything like Francis Rowe, I don’t know what I *should* have done ! ”

“ Better go to bed,” said Tom, and walked straight over to the window, and stood twisting the curtain cord till it broke.

The next morning Tom and his father were shut up together for an hour and a half : nobody could get in ; nobody knew what was going on. At the end of the hour and half, Tom came out with a terrible frown on his handsome forehead, a look, very unlike Tom, about his mouth. He

went directly to his room, shut his door hard, and locked it. He did not come down till dinner-time, and Gypsy did not dare to go to him. About the middle of the afternoon she went up and knocked. He did not hear, so she pushed open the door softly and went in. He was sitting by his table, with his books open before him, — the Greek and the Euclid, and, Gypsy had time to see before she spoke, the mysterious blue book which he had taken out of her sight so roughly the night before.

“Why, Tom, what are you doing?”

“Cramming.”

“Cramming?”

“Studying, then; shut the door if you’re going to talk about it.”

Gypsy shut the door, and came up and stood beside him.

“Studying in vacation? Why, I don’t understand.”

“I don’t suppose you do, and I wish you needn’t. I’m conditioned, that’s all.”

“Conditioned!” Gypsy sat down slowly, looking at him. Tom took out his knife and began to whittle the table in dogged silence.

“That means — why, it means you didn’t get your lessons and they —”

“It means I fell below average, and I’ve got to make it up. There! you have it now,” said Tom, bringing his hand down heavily on the table.

“Oh, Tom,” said Gypsy, “I am so sorry!” And that was every word she said, and the very best thing she could have said. Tom winked, and coughed, and turned over the leaves of his book, and threw it down sharply.

“That’s the worst of it. I suppose I might have made you and mother proud of me. The Tutors were rough on me, all through, every one, just because they said I might head the division if I chose to; I should like to know how they knew!”

“Of course they knew; everybody knows,”

said Gypsy, sadly. "And I thought — we all thought —" She stopped, fearing that what she was going to say would sound like a taunt. Tom's handsome face flushed.

"I know what you all thought. And if ever a fellow meant to behave, and get a rank, I did. But you see there's always so much fun going on at college, and father doesn't make the least account of that. He's given me a terrible blowing this morning."

"I was afraid so. About the rank?"

"Yes; that's all he knows to talk about yet. He'll hunt up something else before long."

"Tom!"

"Well, he does put me out so, Gypsy. I suppose I deserve a little of it, but he has such a way of *hacking* at you. It's Tom this, Tom that, Tom the other, forever reminding you that you've been acting like a fool. He knocks out all the *sorry* there is in me."

Gypsy sat in silence, not wishing to say any-

thing disrespectful of her father, not daring or wishing to throw all the blame on Tom. Presently, thinking that she was in his way, she ~~rose~~ to go out of the room. Tom called her back.

“ See here, Gypsy, you’ve seen this pony of course, and I don’t know that I’m sorry. I hid it away from you last night, and felt cheap enough. I suppose you’ll think I’m a horribl sinner, but I can’t bear to cheat about it.”

“ Pony ?” said Gypsy, bewildered, looking round with some vague ideas of finding a rocking-horse, or some stuffed zoölogical specimen.

“ Here, this.” Tom took up the blue book, and Gypsy saw that it was a translation of Homer. She looked up with a shocked, recoiling look that Tom had never seen in his sister’s eyes before, and that he did not very soon forget.

“ Tom, how *can* you ?”

Tom’s honest eyes quailed, looked doubtful, brightened again.

"Gypsy, it isn't half as bad as you think. I only use it in the worst places, after I've made my own translation. All the fellows do that, and the Faculty know it as well as we do. I don't use it as some fellows do, — learn all my lesson by it; I wouldn't be *mean* enough."

"But why use it at all?" said Gypsy, doubtfully, yet half relieved.

"Then I shouldn't stand on an equal footing with the rest, to start with; it's a perfectly understood thing. Why, one time one of the Tutors talked with the class about it. To use it as I use it is no cheat; I've not quite come to *that*."

"Then why did you hide it away and keep it secret? I don't see exactly."

"Just for the reason I hide away so many things," said Tom, half under his breath, — "father. He would make a terrible row."

Gypsy did not say anything.

"A fellow doesn't like to be looked at with

such eyes as you had a minute ago," said Tom, moving uneasily in his chair. " If you won't believe I use it in honest ways, here, — to show you how little I care for it, — take the thing and lock it up in your drawer, and I'll come to you when I want it."

It is not my purpose to enter into a discussion of the minor moralities of "ponying" here, or to decide whether or not Tom's view of the matter, which is by no means an unusual one, was correct. Gypsy did not; she followed her instinct; she kissed Tom, seized the book, and ran away to her own room, feeling very thankful, and wondering what her eyes had to do with it.

Into the dark outline Gypsy had scattered one little seed, perhaps. If she sowed her shadow full of such, it might prove to be no shadow at all, but a spot of bloom flashing white and golden in the light.

CHAPTER V.

THE SHADOW DEEPENS.

DONE sunny morning, a few days after Tom came, Gypsy was sitting by the dining-room window, which she had opened to let a breath of the fresh, sparkling air into the heated room. She was very busy with her work, which was of a sort unusual for a girl. She was neither crocheting, nor netting, nor knitting tides, nor stringing beads, nor darning stockings,—though I cannot say that there were not an abundance up in her bureau drawers in sad need of darning;—she was making a ball. Neither was it one of the soft, pudding-like affairs commonly and contemptuously styled “girls’ balls;” it was wound on a

bullet, with the finest, strongest twine, and almost as tightly drawn as if her firm, pink fingers had been twice as large and brown as they were. She was now sewing on the leather cover with stout, waxed twine and an enormous needle, her face flushed, and her fingers aching. Tom was the object of this, as he was now of almost everything that she did. Tom liked to pass ball with her, and it kept him at home.

Suddenly she started a little, and dropped her work, needles, thread, ball, and all. It was only a sound that she had heard, but it sent the hot blood flushing over her face, and her eyes grew dark and troubled. It was the sound of voices,—two; of voices in loud and angry discussion. She could not see the speakers, but they seemed to be approaching the house behind the wood-pile; to avoid hearing what they said was impossible.

“I should like to know how long this has been going on.”

There was no answer.

"I should like to know how long this has been going on, Tom."

"I don't know, sir, and I don't see that it is anything so dreadful, if it had been going on all the term; there aren't fifteen fellows in the class that don't do it."

"What other men do is no concern of yours. It is a filthy habit, and I never thought a son of mine would come to it. Besides, it will ruin your health. How much more of the stuff have you?"

"A few of Hall's Havanas, and some I bought myself."

"Well, sir, you will throw them away to day. I can't have it."

"I don't think it is a case in which you ought to give me any *commands*, father. I'm too old to be treated so."

"I can't help it, my son; I can't help it. If you're young enough to do such things you're young enough to be commanded. You

don't know how you have troubled and disappointed me. I lay awake all last night worrying about you, and — ”

“ Why couldn't you trust me a little then, father, and say you didn't like it, and then leave the matter to me? Mother and Gypsy go at me different ways. I might have given it up for *them*.” Just there the voices stopped, and the speakers came in sight around the wood-pile; Tom flushed and angry, his father with a troubled, helpless face.

Mrs. Breynton, too, had heard, it seemed, for she came into the entry, and met them at the door. She said nothing, but her eyes asked what was the matter.

“ I found him out behind the wood-pile, smoking, and that's what's the matter!” said his father, excitedly.

“ Mr. Simms sent over a message from the store just now for you,” said Mrs. Breynton, in her quiet way. “ Can't we talk about this at

some other time? He said you were wanted very much,—something about the new hydraulic press, I believe."

"Oh, I wonder if it has come. Well, I must go right over. Tom, you can tell the story to your mother yourself."

But she did not ask for it. She let him slip away to his room unobserved; he would be better alone till that flash was out of his eye. Tom's mother always *comprehended* him.

Gypsy was a little like her, for she, too, left Tom to himself, determined not to say anything about what had happened this morning,—if indeed she ever spoke of it,—until exactly the right time came. The right time came that very afternoon.

She and Tom had been out together at Yorkbury's fashionable hour, on Yorkbury's fashionable promenade,—down to the Post Office. Gypsy highly enjoyed—as what girl would not?—putting on her best hat and cherry

ribbons, swinging her new cherry-lined muff by its tassel, and walking up and down among the girls and boys, with Tom, to "show him off." A handsome brother fresh from college, with a fancy cane and a Sigma Epsilon pin, *and* a moustache, was a possession well worth having. All the girls were sure to watch them, and inform her confidentially at recess the next day that they wished they had a brother just exactly like him. Such a delightful little sense of airy importance there was, too, in taking his arm, and trying to look as if she had been used to taking gentlemen's arms these dozen years !

On this afternoon, after a little chatting and skirmishing and clustering around the office steps, and after Gypsy had listened to the communications of some half dozen girls who all happened to have something singularly important to tell her, they fell in with Sarah Rowe and Francis, and the four walked home together. On the way, Francis took a cigar from his pocket, and lazily lighted it.

"No offence to the ladies, I hope?"

"Dear, no!" cried Sarah. "Why I dote on cigar-smoke, — when it's the real Havana, I mean, of course; I think there's something *so* charming about it, don't you, Gypsy?"

"No," said Gypsy, bluntly.

"Why, really," said Mr. Francis, pausing with the cigar half way to his lips, "I didn't know — I —"

"Oh, you needn't stop on my account," said Gypsy, coolly. "Sarah asked what I thought, and I told her."

"Well, since you don't care," said Mr. Francis, and smoked all the way home. Gypsy was decidedly too young to waste his gallantry upon; especially when such a stupendous sacrifice was involved.

"See here," said Tom, after the Rowes had turned off to go home; "don't you really like tobacco-smoke, Gypsy?"

"I particularly dislike it," said Gypsy.

“ Well, that’s queer! I thought all girls raved over it, like Sarah there. So you think, as father does, that it’s wicked to smoke?”

“ Wicked? no indeed. But I think it’s *horrid*.”

Gypsy’s “ horrid ” was untranslatable. Tom winced under it as he would never have done if she had undertaken to treat him to an anti-tobacco sermon.

“ My dear, what a tone! Anybody would think you were talking to a cannibal or a Mormon. Well, to be honest, Gyp, I wish there were a few other girls like you; there’d be less smoking. Most of them make their brothers cigar-cases and tobacco-bags, to say nothing of teasing for cigarettes themselves, — at least I’ve heard that done more than once. I rather think you wouldn’t make me a tobacco-bag now, if I asked you.”

“ Ask me if you dare, sir ! ”

“ Well, I shouldn’t dare. Now you see,

Gypsy, I don't think there's anything so horrible about smoking, nor disgusting, nor ungentlemanly,— that is, after you get used to it: but I do wish father had a little more of your style. To tell the truth, I'm not so fond of it but that I would have given it up for you or mother, if I were asked in a proper way ; but to be talked to as if I had committed the seven deadly sins, and then told I mustn't, on top of it, is more than a fellow can stand ! Now all the smoking I do has got to be done on the sly."

" But you wouldn't do *that*."

Gypsy said this with a little of the look that she had when she took the " pony " from him up-stairs.

Tom shrugged his shoulders and whistled.

They walked on in silence a few minutes, he with his handsome face working and changing.

" Gypsy," he said, suddenly.

" Well ? "

" You're sort of taken down, — blue, — cut

up, — about your revered and idolized brother's collegiate course so far, — now own up."

"Yes," said Gypsy, "a little, Tom."

"Well, to put it in black and white, so am I. I did mean, on my word and honor, to take a rank, and let the pomps and vanities alone. You don't know the worst of me, either."

"The worst! Worse than this! Oh, Tom, what will father —"

Gypsy began so, but stopped, seeing that she had said the wrong thing. There was an awkward silence.

"Gypsy," said Tom, at length, "I wish you would write to a fellow oftener."

"Why?"

"Well, it's something from home, and you have more time than the rest. Besides, I tell you, Gypsy, you haven't the least idea what sort of doings there are going on all round a chap when he's away from you, — not the least; and I hope you never will. It is one thing to

keep straight in Yorkbury, and another at Yale. And getting something from home, and being reminded that there's somebody who would be sorry, — well, every little helps. Pretty long breathing-spaces there were between some of your letters last term; you gave me plenty of time to forget you."

Gypsy's cheeks burned for shame and sorrow, and then and there she made a certain promise to herself, which, I am glad to say, she never broke.

A day or two after, she was out in the front yard snowballing with Tom, when Francis Rowe lounged up to the fence.

"Hilloa!" said Tom.

"How are you?" nodded Francis; "here a minute."

Tom went, pursued by Gypsy's well-aimed balls.

"I have something to tell you," said Francis, mysteriously, and then he lowered his voice so

that Gypsy, from the door-steps where she was sitting, could not hear what it was. She was incapable of trying to listen, so she turned away and began to make statuettes out of the damp snow. Every now and then, however, she caught a word : “ East Yorkbury.” “ Who’ll be the wiser ? ” “ But — I don’t know — ” “ Prime fun.” “ Pshaw ! man ! where’s the harm ? There’ll be — ” Then mysterious whispers again, and at last Francis walked off whistling, and Tom came back. He had forgotten all about the snowballs ; he looked perplexed and thoughtful, and sat down on the steps without saying a word. Gypsy waited a minute ; then kicked over her statuettes and walked abruptly into the house, a little disappointed, but too proud to ask for anything that he did not choose to give her.

That night she went to singing-school with Sarah Rowe. Tom did not go ; he said he was going to be busy ; at which Gypsy wondered a little, but said nothing.

"Francis wouldn't come to-night either," said Sarah, as they went in together. "He's gone to a billiard-match over at East Yorkbury, I believe, or something of the sort. At least I heard him talking to Bob Guest about it, only he said I mustn't tell."

Gypsy stopped short, her face flushing.

"What time — do you know what time he was going?"

"I don't remember exactly, — half past seven, I think. Anyway, I know he expected to be home before it was very late. I suppose he thought father would have something to say about it. That East Yorkbury tavern is a horrid place. I should be ashamed to be seen there if I were Francis. But what's the matter? Where on earth are you going?"

"Home."

"*Home?*"

"I don't believe I care to stay to the meeting," said Gypsy. hurriedly; "it's twenty-five

minutes after seven now, and how few have come. I don't believe it's going to be much of a meeting. Besides, I've just thought of something I want to do."

"But there's the solo in 'Star of the Evening'; — what shall we do without you? Oh, there's George Castles up in the corner, looking at you like everything. I know he means to come home with you."

But Sarah suddenly discovered that she was talking to the empty entry. Gypsy had slipped out and down the steps.

She started homewards on a rapid walk, which soon broke into a run. The moon was full, and the snow-covered hills and fields, bright in the light, looked like a picture cut in pearl. At any other time the beauty and the hush would have carried Gypsy away into a world of delightful young dreams. To-night she had something else to think about. The girls and boys, on their way to singing-school, stopped

and wondered as she ran past them, calling after her ; she scarcely allowed herself time to answer, but flew on, flushed and panting, till she had left them out of sight, and was at last alone upon the moonlit road.

Not quite alone, though. The sound of sleigh-bells broke suddenly on the air, and a dark bay horse and slight cutter turned a near corner, and swept up to her, and shot past her, and left her standing like a statue.

Two men were in the sleigh, and the light as they passed struck their faces sharply. They were Francis Rowe and Tom.

Gypsy stood a moment looking after them, shocked and puzzled and helpless ; then a quick thought flashed brightly over her face ; she started with a bound, and sprang away towards home.

She was very near it, — nearer than she had thought ; it took her but a moment to reach the end of the garden, to climb the fence, to wade

through the snow that lay deeply on the flower-beds, and so come out into the back yard. The house was still and dark. Her father and mother were both out to tea, and Winnie was in bed. Patty's light glimmered from the kitchen where she nodded, half asleep, over her sewing.

Gypsy went directly to the barn, unlocked the stable door, and peered into the dark stall where old Billy was sedately dreaming over last summer's clover-tops. She untied his halter, pulled him out with a jerk, and saddled and bridled him briskly. She had done it many times before, when Tom and her father were both away, but it was always opposed to Billy's theories of the eternal fitness of things, and to be called away from one's dreams and one's clover at such an unearthly hour, by a *girl*, was certainly adding insult to injury. His justifiable displeasure thereat he signified — as I have no doubt I should have done if I had been in his

place — by backing into the stall, tossing his head just one inch beyond her reach, sidling away when she was ready to mount, biting her fingers, and nipping her arms, and treading on her dress, and otherwise playing the agreeable, till her patience and temper were nearly exhausted. Finally, by dint of threats, persuasion, and diplomacy, she succeeded, to his intense mortification and disgust, in mounting, and whipped him out into the cold night air.

There were two roads to East Yorkbury, a long one, and a short one which had been cut across for farmers, through the fields. Tom and Francis would take the long one, for there was no sleighing upon the other. There was a chance, just a chance, that a swift rider through the fields might intercept them. But the snow lay deep and drifted and roughly broken; and Billy was neither so young nor so free as he might have been. However, Gypsy was not a girl to give up very easily to obstacles. She could but try at least; trying would do no harm

So she whipped and coaxed Billy into a canter, and swept away through the moonlight, over the lonely road. It was very lonely. There was not a sound to be heard but the heavy plunges of the horse through the drifted snow, and the sighing of the wind through the trees. Her own shadow took strange shapes as it leaped along beside her on the moonlit bank and wall. The fields and woods stretched out each side of her in fantastic patches of light and shade, solitary and still. Gypsy was not afraid, she was too much troubled about Tom to be afraid ; but she had a bleak, cold, deserted feeling which made that singular ride one long to be remembered. She was haunted by vague, half-formed fears for Tom, too ; by new and horrible mistrust of him ; by a dread that she should be too late. But if she were not too late, what then ? She hardly knew what then. She had formed no plans as to what she should do or say. She had come because she could

not help it; she was going on because she could not help it. Tom might not listen to her; he might be very angry; it might do more harm than good that she had come. But here she was, and she trusted to her own instinct to guide her. Gypsy's instincts were, however, sad blunders sometimes. Whether this one was a blunder or something else, the event only would prove.

The event came very near not proving ~~at~~ all. She had ridden through the last patch of pine woods, and come out into a broad stretch of light, level ground, from which the main road was faintly visible, winding away to East Yorkbury tavern. Billy, thoroughly exhausted, was panting painfully, head hanging, and ears lopped down; his heavy plunges had changed into a feeble trot; the trot was settling gradually to a walk, and when Billy made up his mind to walk, that was the end of him. When bark! — yes, the sound of sleigh-bells, and

the voices of unseen drivers upon the winding road.

Gypsy uttered a little cry, and threw her arms about the horse's neck, as if he had been human.

"Oh, Billy, *please!* Can't you go a little faster? I don't *want* Tom to go." And Billy pleased. Whether he understood what Tom had to do with it I cannot state; but, at the word, he jerked his drooping head with a snort, and broke away like a wild thing under the touch of Gypsy's whip.

The cutter with its fleet bay was just slewing past the cart-road, when an apparition of a girl on a white horse galloped up, and Francis reined in with a shout.

She made a picture; her net had come off, and her hair was blown back from her face in the strong wind; her cheeks were scarlet, her lips a little pale, and her eyes on fire. For an instant she sat perfectly still upon the horse, and Tom stared.

“Tom,” she said then, softly.

“Gypsy Breynton — *you!*” Tom finished by a word which I will not repeat; there was nothing wrong about it, but it was not as elegant as it might have been, and one gets enough of college slang in real life without putting it into print when it can be avoided.

“Yes, it’s I. Please look here a minute.”

Tom sprang out into the snow, and left Francis growling at the delay. Gypsy leaned down over old Billy’s neck, and put her hand upon Tom’s shoulder. It was almost purple from the cold, for in her haste she had come off without her mittens, and had driven all the way in cold, thin gloves.

“If you only wouldn’t! I don’t want you to go — I mean — please, Tom dear, come home. Sarah says East Yorkbury’s such a dreadful place, and so I harnessed Billy and came over on the cart-road, and I *do* hope you won’t be angry!” blundered poor Gypsy, her cheeks very red and her lips very pale.

Tom was angry — very angry. For a moment he only shut up his lips and looked down at the little purple hand that trembled on his shoulder, as if he were trying to keep back some dreadful words. If it had not been so very purple and little, and if it had not been so strange a sight to see Gypsy tremble, he might have said worse than he did.

“Who’s been telling you I was going to East Yorkbury?” he said, between his teeth.

“Nobody told me, Tom; I guessed it. To think of you over in that tavern, with all those drunken — Oh, Tom, I did hope you wouldn’t be angry, and would *please* to come back with me!”

“Hurry up, Breynton,” called Francis from the sleigh; “don’t keep a fellow waiting. Why didn’t Gypsy do her talking before you started? I’m glad *my* sister minds her own business, and lets mine alone!”

Tom pushed off the purple hand from his shoulder.

"Gypsy, you must go right straight home. I *am* angry, and you've done a very silly thing. I don't want you inquiring into my affairs and meddling with them like this, and you may remember it next time. Here, take my mittens, and get home as fast as you can."

With that he sprang into the sleigh and left her.

If he had struck her, Gypsy could not have felt worse. Never had Tom spoken so to her — never, since she was a baby and used to stamp on his kites and throw his boats down the well. It seemed as if it were more than she could bear. Billy, glad to turn his face homewards, started briskly away ; and she just threw down the reins, and put her arms about his huge, warm neck, and cried as hard as if her heart would break.

How far she had gone she did not exactly know ; she was still riding on with her face hidden in Billy's mane, and she was still sobbing

as Gypsy very seldom sobbed, when the first she knew, there was a strong hand on Billy's bridle and another about her neck, and two arms lifted her right off the saddle, and there was Tom.

“ Oh, Tom, I didn’t mean to — I didn’t really mean to make you angry. I felt so badly about your going, and I thought — ”

“ Gypsy, look up here.”

Gypsy looked up.

“ I was a heathen, and the next time I speak so to you, I’ll give you leave to chop my tongue out with a hatchet. Now let’s go home.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE WATCH UPON THE STAIRS.

 YOULL come over to-night, of course, Gypsy?"

 "Come over to what? Oh, the candy-pull."

"Yes; we're going to have just the best fun. Francis knows a way of flavoring the candy with lemon, and we're going to try it. Besides, Delia Guest and Bob are coming, and the Holmans."

"Well, I'm afraid I can't. I should love to, dearly, but —

"Not come! Well, I should like to know!"

"I think I'd better stay with Tom."

"Let Tom come too, of course."

“ He would like to, but he has a cold, and couldn’t go out in this snow-storm. He would miss me if I went, and be lonely, — that is, I can play checkers with him. Besides, I like to make it as nice as I can for him when he is at home, so as to — ”

“ To what ? ”

“ Keep him in evenings.”

Those four words had come to rule all Gypsy’s plans and words and thoughts. It seemed strange that Tom’s vacation, to which she had looked forward so long, and of which she had dreamed as if it were some beautiful fairy-tale, should end in *that*. Into Gypsy’s merry, thoughtless heart the new anxiety and the new pain crept like a chill ; it took time for her to get used to it ; but the queer thing about it was, she thought, that when she had become used to it, it seemed as if it had always been there.

For a while after the East Yorkbury under-

taking, Tom avoided Francis, kept very much at home with his mother and Gypsy, and seemed so sober and sorry and ashamed, that Gypsy's heart ached for him. Whatever the faults into which he had fallen at college, — and it was quite probable that she did not know the worst of them, — Tom was very far from being a thoroughly bad boy. Until he went to New Haven, he had known nothing worse than Yorkbury temptations, and had been helped every day of his life by the happiest home and the most patient love that a boy could desire. To go out from such a home in all the eagerness and ignorance of seventeen young years, into Yale College, is very much like walking into a furnace. It needs what Tom had not, — what Gypsy had vaguely felt from the beginning that he ought to have, — *principle*, to come out of it unsinged. Tom had no deeper principle than his own generous impulses and quick sense of honor; even these had been severely put to the

test ; the smell of the fire had passed upon him. Although he was much given to lecturing thoughtless Gypsy in his superior, elder-brotherly way, yet in many respects he was much like her. A little more reserved ; somewhat better able to say the right thing, or not to say anything if necessary ; by right of four years' seniority, making fewer blunders, but like her, quick to do wrong or right on a moment's impulse, sorry for his faults and willing to say so, and very likely to do the same thing over to-morrow ; especially — and herein lay the key to the worst of him — sufficiently determined to get the *fun* out of life, come what might. Indeed, Gypsy felt so much sympathy with him that it was an effort to scold him sometimes.

“ I hate to have you do such things, you know,” she said one day when Tom had been confiding to her the story of a certain escapade with his Tutor, which was, like a great many

wrong things in this world, undeniably funny ; “ but it makes me want to go to college terribly. How I should act ! I know just as well I should go head first into all the rushes, and put pins in the Prof.’s chairs, and — no, I wouldn’t haze, because that’s mean ; but I *should* rather go to an oyster supper than study, and I should get suspended in three weeks, and then come home and be sorry, and I suppose it *is* fortunate for the institution that I’m not a boy ! ”

Which certainly was not the wisest thing she could have said, and she was sorry before the words were off her lips.

As I said, for awhile Tom stayed at home, and let Francis alone ; he threw away his cigars, studied hard in the mornings, played checkers in the evenings, took the children to ride in the afternoons, pushed the cat through the stove-pipe, experimented on Mrs. Surly’s puppy helped his mother stone the raisins for her puddings, read “ Guy Mannering ” aloud to Gypsy

helped his father at the store, became, in a word, the old merry, thoughtful, generous Tom, and Gypsy was happy.

Not so happy, though, that she ceased to work and plan to keep him with her, or ever lost the dull, new sense of uneasiness and care. Not so happy as to be thoroughly taken by surprise when restless Tom wearied of his quiet life and good resolves, and something happened far worse than anything which had happened yet; far worse than anything that she had ever thought *could* happen to Tom.

It was only two days before the short vacation ended. Tom had gone to a lyceum lecture that evening with Francis Rowe. He would be home at ten o'clock, he said, or a quarter past ten at the latest. It was the family custom to break up early. Mr. Breynton was apt to be sleepy, his wife tired, and Gypsy was always ready for bed; so that the house was usually still soon after nine. On this night, Mrs

Breynton had a headache (it sometimes seemed to Gypsy that her mother had a great many headaches of late), and it was rather dull without Tom, so that they separated even earlier than usual. By half past nine, they were probably all asleep.

Gypsy had a remarkably unpleasant dream. She thought that she was standing on the edge of a huge circular chasm lined with winding stairs, which gave back a hollow, ugly echo to the foot; they seemed to be built of ancient, wood, worm-eaten and moss-grown; to have stood there for centuries, crumbling away and winding down into utter darkness. The horrible thing about them was, that nobody knew what was at the bottom. Another horrible thing was that nobody who went down ever came up. While she stood peering over the edge and shivering, Tom pushed by her with a cry and sprang into the chasm, and began to leap down the hideous stairway. She stretched

out her arms to him, calling him by name, but he did not or would not hear her. She leaped down after him, and, impelled by the fearful, dizzy motion, kept winding on and could not stop. She called him but he did not answer. He was always just ahead of her, but never within her reach. He shot on and down, and the hollow echo of his leaping steps came back, and the daylight dimmed and his form grew faint and faded out of her sight, and darkness fell, and only the echoes were left, which weakened and grew thin, and were lost in utter silence.

She started up with a cry of terror which woke her. A faint moonbeam was falling in upon the bed. She remembered that the moon rose late that night, and could not light her room till after ten. She was just getting up to see what time it was, when she heard the kitchen clock strike the half-hour. She remembered Tom, and was wide awake at once. He had

undoubtedly come in while she was asleep, — very likely his steps coming up the stairs had given her that ugly dream; still she thought she should go to sleep a little more comfortably to feel sure. So she opened her door softly and looked out into the entry; all was still. She stepped on tiptoe to Tom's room: the door was open; the room was empty.

Well, only a quarter of an hour after time. But it was a singularly late lyceum lecture. And he said he should certainly be at home.

She went back to her own room, and crept shivering into bed, but she could not sleep; she rose and went to the window; both yard and street lay hushed and solitary in the moonlight; no human being was in sight; not a sound was to be heard but the moaning of the wind. The lecture must be over long ago, for the lights were out in Mrs. Surly's house, and her boarders always went to the lyceum. It must have been over an hour ago. Where could he be?

Gypsy began to be frightened. Her cheeks grew hot and her hands grew cold; she jumped up and began to walk across the room as fast as she could walk; she came back and sat down again, and looked again into the yard and up the moonlit street, and jumped up and paced the room again. Once a drunken singer in the street passed by the house; her cheeks grew hotter and her hands grew colder. She had grown too restless for the narrow room, so she threw her dress and shawl about her, went softly out, and sat down on the stairs where she could watch the door.

If Tom only had not gone with Francis? If she could have got up a candy-pull and kept him at home? If she had gone to the lecture with him? If he should have gone to East Yorkbury? If he were playing billiards somewhere now, such wretched, drunken faces all around him as she had sometimes seen in the alleys on the way to Peace Maythorne's room?

If he should become a gambler, or worse? If he should grow up into such a man as Francis — Tom? What would her mother say? — poor mother, she had been looking so pale lately, and troubled. Should she call her and tell her that Tom had not come home? What would her father say?

And that was the worst of all. What *would* he? No, she must not call them; it would be so terrible between him and Tom if anything had gone wrong. There was nothing to be done but for her to keep awake till Tom came, and let him quietly in. Eleven o'clock. Would he never come?

She began to be very cold, sitting there, so she stole out to the kitchen stove to try to warm herself by the remains of the evening fire; then, afraid that Tom would come while she was out there, she went back to her post upon the stairs.

The entry was dark except for a dull patch

of moonshine that struggled in through the curtained sidelights, and lay pale upon the floor. In the corners the shadows were heavy. Under the stairs the shadows were black. Now and then a board creaked somewhere, or a mouse rattled past unseen in the wall. It is dreary at best, to be the only waking thing at midnight in a silent house. The vague sense of uneasiness about Tom, fearing she knew not what, waiting she knew not why, the dread that her father might come out and find her there, the dread of what would happen if he should meet Tom coming in, — pictures of his stern, shocked face and Tom's angry eyes, — all this made that watch upon the stairs about as miserable an hour as Gypsy had ever passed.

Half past eleven. How still it was ! Tom had never been out so late as this before.

Twelve o'clock. Could some accident have happened to him ? Was it possible ? Ought she to call her mother ? Should she wait a little

longer, or — What was that? Footsteps! She crept softly down the stairs, and peered through the sidelights.

Yes, footsteps, — heavy, slow, irregular, huffing blindly through the snow. But Tom walked like a man, with a spring in his firm, strong tread. That man with his hat pulled over his eyes, with his coat turned wrong side out, who slouched up to the door and fumbled for the handle, — was *that* Tom?

Gypsy turned the latch without noise, and the man muttered some incoherent words, and reeled in, and fell heavily upon the stairs, — and it was Tom.

Gypsy just dropped her hands and looked. If some one had bayoneted her dead there against the wall, she could not have stood more still. She could feel the hot blood rush into her heart, and rush away again; her head swam round dizzily, and for a moment she had a fancy that she was suffocating. Whatever the

feeling was, it passed in a moment, and she stepped up and touched Tom on the shoulder.

He muttered that her hands were cold, and that he wanted another glass.

“Tom,” she said, under her breath, “Tom dear, come up to bed.”

Tom looked at her stupidly, and tried to rise, but staggered against the banisters. His heavy boots hit the stairs loudly, and the old mahogany of the banisters creaked from top to bottom.

“Oh, father will 'ear, father *will* hear!” whispered Gypsy, in an agony. “Lean on me, Tom — so; now try again.”

Tom stood up and leaned upon her shoulder, — the strong fellow with his six feet of manliness, — and Gypsy helped him up the stairs. Sometimes she had to stop to take breath and gather strength. Sometimes the dizziness came back to her head, and she thought that she was falling. Twice Tom reeled against the wall, and she listened for her father's opening door,

and all the color went out of her cheeks and lips. Once Tom griped her shoulder so that she nearly cried out with the pain.

But they reached the top of the stairs, and reached his room, and shut the door, and had wakened no one. Tom threw himself upon the bed and asked for water. Gypsy hurried to the wash-stand, filled his mug, and brought it to him. But he had fallen into a heavy, **drunken sleep.**

CHAPTER VII.

SOMETHING NEW.

 YOU see, Peace, I used to be so proud of Tom."

Peace saw.

“ I used to keep thinking how much better he was than the other girls’ brothers, and how good he was, and that he never went with the wild boys, and that he would stand so high at college, and make mother so glad and all, and to have it come to — *that*.”

Peace did not know what “ *that* ” was ; Gypsy had never told her ; she did not like to ask.

“ I don’t suppose you understand what I am talking about,” said Gypsy, with heightened color, “ but the fact is, I can’t bear to say it,—

not so much as to *say* it, Peace. It was so terrible, and I had never known nor suspected, but, Peace Maythorne, he said it never happened but once before ; he said so. He was sick after it *the next morning*, because the whiskey was so bad — there ! I might have known I couldn't help letting it out, — just like me !”

Peace gave her one of her own beautiful answers ; she took her hand and held it softly, and did not say a word. Gypsy began to wink.

“ Well, I knew you'd feel badly for me ; you always do. I wish I'd told you before. It helps me to have you sorry for me, somehow ; it *goes all over me*. One little kiss? — there ! Now I'm going to tell you about it. It won't bother you to death ? Well, then, you see, Peace Maythorne, I lay awake till two o'clock that night, I felt so. I wouldn't live that night over again — why, not for anything in this world. Well, the next morning he *felt* sick,

but he said he had a headache, which *was* true, and he lay in bed till after breakfast and then got up, so that father shouldn't suspect. You see that would be so dreadful. Father loves Tom, and he's real good, but he never knows how to go at him. He makes Tom angry and never understands, and then Tom is disrespectful, and mother looks, and I cry, and we have an awful time. So Tom and I weren't either of us going to tell him. But mother knows, I know, for she's been up in her room crying ever so much, and she and Tom had a long talk before he went back. I guess he told her, — he thinks the world of mother, and was so sorry, and hates to cheat so. Oh, he *was* so sorry! He didn't look any more like Tom the next day, and kept by himself, and his eyes, — you know he has such beautiful eyes, Peace, and so bright, — well, his eyes were so ashamed, I thought I should cry right out to look at them. I can't bear to have Tom ashamed.

Well, then it came night, and he had been alone all day, and I went up into his room, and that's what I started to tell you about. You're not tired of me yet?"

"Not a bit, dear."

"Well, I went up, and there he sat alone in the dark and cold ; there was a little red sparkle of light through the damper, but the fire was almost out. So said I 'Tom,' softly. He had his elbows on the table and his head down. 'What do you want?' said he, and never looked up. 'I want to see you, Tom. I haven't seen you all day hardly.' Then he said something that I can't bear to think about, Peace Maythorne, not even to think about. 'I shouldn't think you'd ever want to see me again. I wish I were out of the world and out of your way ;' that's what he said. I wouldn't have you think I'm crying, though, — where's my handkerchief, for pity's sake? And what do you suppose I did? — like a little goose ! Why, I just jumped

into his lap. I did, I jumped into his lap right off, and I had come up expecting to talk soberly at him and scold him, and I had to go and do that, and that was the end of me!"

"What did he do?" said Peace, smiling, but strangely enough, hunting for her handkerchief, too.

"Do? Well, he had to lift up his head anyway; he couldn't help himself. So I saw his face in the red sparkle from the damper, and it was just as white, and I threw my arms straight around his neck,—I know I choked him dreadfully:—and said he, 'Gypsy, weren't you ashamed of me,—ashamed to have me for a brother?'

"'Yes, Tom,' said I, 'I was ashamed of you last night,' for I couldn't tell a lie you see, anyway. Down went his head again on the table,—only my arms were in the way, and it hurt, and I squealed, and so he had to take it up again. 'Why don't you take your arms off,

Gypsy? I'm not fit to have them there. Why don't you take them off?' I said I was very comfortable, and I was going to keep them there. 'But you're ashamed of me,' said he, 'and you ought to be!'

" 'No, Tom, I'm not ashamed of you now. I was last night. I'm not a bit ashamed now, because you are sorry.' And what do you suppose he said?"

" I couldn't guess."

" He held up his head, and looked into my eyes. ' You don't mean to say that you're going to love me as much as you did before?' And, Peace, I did; I couldn't help it if I *couldn't*, you know, only don't you ever tell, but said I, ' Tom Breynton, I love you a great deal more.' That's what I said, like a little simpleton."

" What did he say?"

" Say? He didn't say a word for so long I was frightened half out of my wits. He just

hid his face up against my hair, (my net was coming off, — you know it always is,) and Peace Maythorne, I do believe he was crying. I don't know. I never saw Tom cry. He didn't make any noise about it, the way girls do, though. At last, said he, all of a sudden, 'Gypsy, I *am* sorry. I never got drunk but once before ; that was one night when I went out with Hall. I don't see how I ever came to do it, but Rowe kept filling up my tumbler. The worst of it is, mother and you. I wish you wouldn't be so good to a fellow.' And then, Peace, he coughed so, that I thought he was going to have a consumption. So by-and-by I began to pat him on the back (he always says I treat him as if he were a great Maltese cat), and I said I was going to be good to him ; as good as I could be ; terribly good ; a cherub ; a pretty pink cherub with wings ; would he give me a kiss ? So he gave me a kiss, and I snuggled up in his arms just as if nothing had

happened, and we had the nicest little talk, and he told me ever so much, Peace, that I can't tell you,—about college, and how hard it was to do right, and how sorry he felt afterwards, and how he did things and didn't think,—just like me, for all the world, and I don't suppose I should be half as good as he if I went to college,—and how sometimes he thought about me, and didn't go off with Hall because I should be sorry. Now, Peace Maythorne, I wonder if you know how that made me feel."

"I think I do."

"Well, I hope you do, for I couldn't tell you, possibly. Anyway, it made up for that dreadful night out on the stairs, and for going to East Yorkbury, and for doing things when I wanted to do something else, and for all the worry and trouble. And I guess I shall write him a few more letters this term than I did last, if I know myself intimately."

"Well, after we had talked awhile, father

began to call down stairs to know why we didn't come down (mother didn't, because she knew what we were about well enough ; she always knows things without having to be told) ; so I started to go.

“ Then I stopped. ‘ Tom,’ said I, ‘ I told you I loved you more than ever, and I do. But there's another thing. I used to be — proud of you.’ You ought to have seen his eyes ! ‘ Well, you shall be proud of me again some day.’ I told him that was just what I meant to be, but that I did wish I could be real sure. Then he fired up like everything, and wanted to know if I thought he meant to get drunk again ; of course he shouldn't ; he hadn't any thoughts of it ; he shouldn't have this time, if the whiskey hadn't been so bad. Well, you see, I knew he might, for all that, so I told him I wished he would promise me something. ‘ What is it ? ’ said he. I told him it was that he shouldn't ever touch the old thing, nor any

other old thing that made people drunk, — not a bit, not a drop, ever. He didn't like that very much, and he drew up his head and put on all his grown-up brother airs, just as he looks when he scolds me for tearing my dresses, and said he never made promises. But I looked at his face in the little red sparkle from the damper, and stood stock still. 'What are you waiting for?' said he. I said I was waiting for that promise. He said I shouldn't have it, and it was of no use waiting; I ought to trust him better than that. He wasn't going to demean himself by promising. I didn't know exactly what demean meant, so I looked it out in the dictionary before I went to bed."

"But you didn't go?"

"No, I guess I didn't. I just stood. I guess I stood there almost ten minutes. 'You'd better go,' said he, by-and-by, and I never said a word. Pretty soon I thought it was getting about time to tease, — I do hate to tease,

though. So I jumped into his arms again before he knew it, and began to say 'Please, Tom,' as hard as ever I could. 'Please what?' said he. I wasn't going to answer such a silly question as that, so I pulled his head down into the red sparkle so as to see his face. It was red one minute and white the next, and I saw the promise coming all over it, so I waited. 'Well,' said he, 'I don't see but I shall have to, to get rid of you. I promise.'"

"What did you do?"

"Strangled him. Just strangled him with my two arms. And then — let me see — Oh, then I got up and jumped up and down, and after that we went down stairs and popped corn."

"How glad you ought to be," said Peace.

"Well, I suppose I am. I don't believe he will drink any more. Tom never breaks his word, never. Besides, he has been back now two weeks, and he wrote me yesterday that he

hadn't touched a drop. I don't trouble about that any more; but, Peace, I never feel quite safe."

"I see."

"Tom means to do right and is so good, and then forgets,—just like me, you know, only I'm not good, and then he is so handsome. College is a dreadful place, and I wish he were through and home again. Then I wish he and father got along better, and I'm always afraid something will go wrong between them. Then, lately, there's mother."

"What about her?"

"She has so many headaches, I can't go to her about Tom nor anything, as I used to, for fear of making her feel worse. If I didn't have you, I don't know what would become of me. I always must have somebody to talk to. There aren't any girls here that I ever say anything sober to. There's Joy, to be sure, but she is off in Boston, and I can't write things out in

letters ; besides, I shouldn't want to tell her about Tom. I love Joy dearly, but she wouldn't do for that. Peace, I'm sort of troubled about mother."

"I'm real sorry," said Peace, in her gentle way, and the three simple words seemed to mean a great deal more than they would if anybody else said them ; "perhaps she will be better when the spring comes."

Gypsy said that she hoped so, rather absently, and then there was a silence.

"Do you know," said Peace, at last, "that you are growing different, Gypsey, — older?"

"Am I? How funny! Well, I have a great many more thoughts to think than I used to. I wonder if you remember the sunbeam that came through the hole in the curtain one day before Tom came home?"

"Oh, yes ; very well."

"So do I. I suppose I'm beginning to find out how they feel rainy days."

Peace smiled, and Gypsy thrummed on the window-sill a moment.

"And you have never had anything but rainy days!"

"The sun is there, you know, all the same, whether it rains or not," said Peace, half to Gypsy, half to herself.

"It's there because you make it. If I were in your place, *I* shouldn't make any. My! how horrid and wicked I should be."

"Why," said Peace, "I am sure I have plenty of things to be thankful for."

"Aunt Jane, for instance?"

Peace colored, for at that very moment Aunt Jane opened the door. She said good-afternoon curtly enough. She felt instinctively that Gypsy did not like her; which was by no means strange, for Gypsy was not apt to take the greatest pains to conceal her opinion of people.

"Would it trouble you too much to fix the fire a little?" said Peace, gently; "I have been

so cold somehow, since this change in the weather."

"I don't know as it makes any difference whether it troubles me or not," said Aunt Jane, in her hard way, tripping over the coal-hod and rattling the poker with what she was pleased to term an "energy," that went through the nerves of Peace like a knife. "There! I'm terrible hurried over that dress of Miss Guest's, and I can't stop to bother over it any longer. I guess that will do. I can't see for the life of me what makes you so shivery."

Miss Jane had just been to the store for a spool of thread, and the rapid walk and bracing air had set her healthy blood to circulating freely; to look from her to the shrunken, pallid figure on the bed, one would not perhaps wonder that she did not see.

"Peace Maythorne!" broke out indignant Gypsy, determined to say something this time; "you haven't but one comforter on your bed besides the quilt."

Peace answered only with a quick hand on Gypsy's mouth.

“One comforter?” spoke up Aunt Jane. “Well, it's thick enough for me, and what is enough for me has got to be enough for her, for all I see, as long as there's no hands but mine to support the two of us. I should like to know who thinks I can afford new ones for her, with cotton-battin' the price it is now-a-days, and all my old pieces sold to the paper-man, to say nothing of where's the time to come from to patch one up.”

Probably Aunt Jane could not afford materials or time for a comforter; there were the rents and food and clothing and fuel to take her hard-earned money. While Gypsy's eyes flashed with anger at her way of expressing it, yet she could not doubt that she had spoken truth, and perplexed her brain with plans to supply the need. Peace must have a comforter. But Peace could not bear to have things *given*

to her. She decided to talk it over with her mother; she always found ways to do things when other people failed. Nobody knew how she managed it, but a few days after, Peace had the comforter on her bed, and her eyes thanked Gypsy, though she did not say a word about it.

Peace Maythorne's room, with its golden sunlight and its quiet face, was a sort of tabernacle to Gypsy. It hushed her and helped her, as nothing else ever did. It reduced all her wild plans to order. It rebuked her mad impulses and thoughtless words. It taught her how best to work and hope for Tom. It made the newness and the strangeness of her trouble easier to bear. Most of all, the pitiful contrast of it with the pleasant places into which her own lines had fallen, silenced all grumbling, made her very thankful. She had depended more on Peace of late, since she had been troubled for Tom, and since those headaches of her mother's

had begun to be so frequent. Almost all of her anxiety and perplexity had been shared with Peace; as she said, she could not very well help it. But when Tom had been back at college a few weeks, something new came up, which she did not tell her nor any one. The reasons for this she could hardly have explained; but she felt very sure that she preferred to keep it to herself.

It was a letter from Tom. A short letter, very pleasant like all Tom's letters, and at first sight a very unimportant one:—

“ DEAR GYPSY:—

Am hurried to death over my Euclid, and can't write much this morning. My stand is better than last term, but it might be decidedly higher yet. I flunked dead in Euclid yesterday, and that is why I mean to study to-day on it.

How is it about those headaches of mother's? Father sent me a package of new-style French envelopes from the store the other day; very

good in him, and I am, his affectionately, T. Did you see Winnie's letter to me that mother wrote for him? It contained the extraordinary information that you had smashed potatoes for dinner, and I couldn't have any; that he was five years old, and that Tom had gone to college. Hall's sister hasn't written to him but once since he has been back. Your two letters a week are jolly. Sometimes when I haven't anything to do, I take them out and read them all over. We had a tip-top rush with the Sophs. yesterday, — beat them, of course. A fellow in our house has got into a row with one of the Profs., and will be rusticated to pay for it.

Love to all. I must go to cramming now on that Euclid. Hall opened a bottle of Old Yriarte last night, and it was tough work looking on and being laughed at; but a promise is a promise.

Very respectfully, your ob't servant,

T. BREYNTON."

P. S See here. I wonder if you have a little money you could lend a fellow for a few weeks.

The state of my finances is somewhat precarious, and I don't dare to go to father just yet; he won't expect me to need more before the middle of the term. I hate to ask you, but the truth is, there was a little bet with Hall, — about four dollars; it was about a girl we met on Chapel Street, and I said if he bowed to her without an introduction, she wouldn't return it, and I felt sure of winning, (only I wouldn't have taken the money), but she wasn't the lady she looked, and she bowed, and I lost. Now the bother of it is, Hall wants his money, and I haven't it to give him; I have some left, but it is due at the hatter's this week. I feel real mean asking you, and you shall have your money back just as soon as father hands over. It is mean to bet, — yes, I know it without your telling me. I don't very often do it. I shall keep clear of it after this. If you will help me out of this scrape and keep dark about it to father, you will be as good a sister as ever luckless scamp was blessed with. Please send as soon as possible."

Gypsy locked up the letter in her desk where no one could see it, and sat down and thought about it.

Tom had done wrong — yes. But he was sorry, and the money must be paid in some way. She did not care in the least about keeping her money, if she could get him out of the difficulty, and perhaps prevent his doing the same thing again. Certainly, if she refused, it would seem selfish and mean, and Tom would be vexed, and there would be an end of her influence over him. Moreover, her money was her own, and she was always allowed to spend it as she chose.

But was it quite right to do it and tell nobody? To tell her father was out of the question. Her mother was locked into her room with a violent sick-headache. There was no one to tell. It seemed to be quite right, she thought. Poor Tom! If he only would not get into so much trouble!

That very night a note was on its way to him.

"DEAR TOM:—

Here are four dollars. It is all I have, and you are welcome to it, only I'm so sorry. I hate bets. Mother would feel badly, I'm afraid, if she knew. She's real sick to-day.

Your loving

GYPSY."

By return of mail came Tom's answer.

"DEAR G.:—

You're a diamond. I did not mean to take all you had. I promise you this is the last of my heavy betting. You are a good girl, and treat me better than I deserve, and make me ashamed of myself.

T."

And did she do just right? Perhaps one can hardly judge without being exactly in her place. Certainly the cases are rare in which it would be best for a girl to pay her brother's wrong fully-contracted debts without her parents'

knowledge. The circumstances were peculiar, and whether she acted prudently or not, her motive was a noble and generous one. It was the nobleness and the generosity which touched Tom ; which roused in him a fresh throb of love for her, and another good resolve.

Two seeds worth sowing, certainly.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOLLOWING THE RUT.

GONE day Gypsy was walking home from school with Sarah Rowe and Delia Guest, after the fashion of very young ladies,— with their arms interlaced about each other's waists, chatting in the most confidential manner (it sounded very much like canary birds chirping) about blue ribbons and pink ribbons, bead nets and magic ruffles, flounces and tucks and spotted veils, and a bewilderment of other abstruse subjects,— when a buggy, drawn by a white horse, drove furiously by. All at once the chirping stopped.

“Why, Gypsy, that's your father!”

“ My father? Where? What? I didn’t see.”

“ No, she was looking the other way. There -- in that buggy; he’s ‘most out of sight now. I wonder what he was driving so for.”

“ Why, that is our buggy, sure enough; and Billy, — I can always tell Billy because his tail is so short. Well, I never did see father drive like that before. I guess Tom would laugh.”

“ Why, look! he’s turned off High Street.”

“ You can see him through the trees.”

“ Why! He’s stopped at —”

“ *The doctor’s!*”

Gypsy turned first red and then pale, and before the girls could say another word to her, she had sprung away from them, and was running up the street, and was out of sight around the corner.

She flew away like a bird, and reached the garden fence and climbed it, and bounded through the drifts, and rushed into the house,

her bat hanging down her neck, her breath gone. In the entry she stopped. The house was very still.

“Mother!”

Nobody answered.

“Mother! Mother! Winnie!”

But nobody answered that. She sprang up the stairs two at a time, and into her mother's room. Winnie was curled up in the corner, looking very much frightened; Patty was stepping about the room, doing something with blankets and hot water. Mrs. Breynton was lying on the bed; she was heavily muffled in the clothing, but she was shivering from head to foot; her cheeks were scarlet, and her eyes looked wild and unnatural.

Gypsy stood still, very much frightened.

“It's the chills she's got,” said Patty, in a whisper; “she was took sudden, and yer fayther's gone for the docther; may the Houly Mother presarve her, fur it's the sisther of me

as was took the like o' that, and was buried in a week, an' tin small childern lift widout a mither till their fayther married 'em one nixt month ; may the saints rest her soul ! ”

Gypsy took off her things softly, sent Winnie down stairs, quieted Patty's heavy tread, and busied herself in doing what she could until the doctor came. She knew nothing about sickness, and she was thoroughly frightened by her mother's looks. Mrs. Breynton scarcely noticed her, but tossed feverishly upon the pillow, asking now and then what could make the room so cold, and why the doctor did not come. Gypsy concluded that she must be kept quiet as well as warm ; so she finally dispensed with Patty, who was doing her noisy best, and had knocked over the washstand and three chairs within five minutes. When Mr. Breynton came in with the doctor, they found Gypsy sole nurse. “ She had arranged things with a womanliness and tact that were wonderful,” her

father said afterwards. "She must have been very much frightened, but she certainly did not show it. She was as gentle and thoughtful about the room as her mother might have been herself. I am sure I never supposed Gypsy capable of it, she is such a fly-away child."

Fever — yes, the doctor said. He could not tell with certainty of what sort, — typhus, very likely; it had been in the system a long time. Had the patient been subject to headaches of late? Yes? He thought so. Yes, yes, he understood matters. Aconite once every half hour till the pulse was brought down.

"Is she going to be very sick?" asked Gypsy, following him down to the door. The doctor shook his head mysteriously, and said that it was impossible to tell. He had seen enough of typhus fevers in his day, and he did not care to see any more. *He hoped she would get through it.*

He was a thin little man, with a melancholy voice and lugubrious whiskers, and a remarkable way of smiling as if he had been telling her some excellent joke. Take him altogether, he in no wise enlivened Gypsy's spirits.

Hard days came after that. Mrs. Breynton grew worse and grew worse. The doctor shook his head and folded his powders, and called it an obstinate case, and meantime she kept growing worse. Gypsy came out of school, put away her books, put on her slippers and a white apron, and went into the sick-room. She became the most delightful little nurse one could desire to have about, — gentle, quiet, thoughtful, quick to see what was wanted before it was asked for, a perfect sunbeam, keeping all her terrible fear to herself, and regular as a clock with the medicines. It was really curious. People looked on, and said, “What has become of blundering Gypsy?” But after all, it was not hard to explain. Her love for her

mother, like her love for Tom, sobered her. When Gypsy was *very much in earnest*, she could think.

The best thing about her was her cheery way of hoping for the best; it is doubtful if her father once suspected that it was any more than the trustful ignorance of a light-hearted child, or that she had the least comprehension of the danger. But once, when she had been sent out to get the air, and had stolen away — a very quiet and pale little Gypsy — to Peace Maythorne, it all came out in a sudden, low cry: —

“ Peace Maythorne, don’t I know how sick she is? And not to dare to think I know, not to *dare*, Peace ! ”

And Peace drew her right down into her arms and let her cry.

Oh, yes, the days were hard. The doubt and suspense of them, the terrible helplessness, and idle watching, the fears of one day brightening into hopes the next, and fading into fears

■gain, — there lay the sting. “She is better to-day, — surely she is a little better.” “Not so well to-day, and the doctor’s face is grave. But she will have a better night, and to-morrow, — yes, she *must* be better to-morrow.” And to-morrow would come, and she would be no better. It used to seem to Gypsy that if they were going to lose her, it would be far easier to know it and face it.

There was once that her courage gave way, and in genuine Gypsy fashion, she blundered into saying something which might have led to serious consequences.

It was just at twilight of one of Mrs. Breyn-ton’s worst days. Her husband had been called away to the store, Mrs. Rowe, who had been with her a part of the day, had gone home to supper, and the night watcher had not yet come. Gypsy was left alone with her, and she was sitting silently on a cricket by the hearth, waiting for any sound or motion from the bed. She

thought that her mother was asleep, and was startled by hearing her speak suddenly, and in a more quiet and natural voice than she had had all day : —

“ Gypsy, what is the matter ? ”

Gypsy drew back into the shadow, vexed with herself for having let the firelight fall on her tear-stained face.

“ Come here a minute, Gypsy.”

Gypsy went up to the bed, and knelt on the floor beside it, laying her face down by her mother’s hand.

“ Now tell me what you were crying about, my child.”

“ Oh, nothing, mother ; that is to say, nothing that — I mean, nothing you ought to know,” began Gypsy, choking down the sobs.

“ Were you crying about me ? ”

Mrs. Breynton’s voice had that weak, appealing accent so often heard in the voices of the sick, and which it is so hard to hear in the

voices of those we love ; and when she spoke, she laid her hand — it had grown pitifully thin and white — softly upon Gypsy's bowed head. It was too much for Gypsy. She broke into a sudden cry, and the bitter, incoherent words tumbled forth one upon another, half drowned in her sobbing.

“ O mother, mother, I was afraid — I was thinking — what *shall* I do if you don’t get well ? O mother, mother, mother ! ” Gypsy instantly knew what she had done. She sprang to her feet in terror. What would her father say ? and the doctor ? How could she have done it ? How could she ?

But the quiet, natural voice spoke up again, very quietly and very naturally, and her mother drew her face down upon the pillows, and tried to hush her sobs.

“ Never mind, Gypsy ; you have done no harm. I know better than any one else how sick I am. And I am glad this has happened.

for there is something I have wanted to say to you. Only, my child, please don't cry so hard."

Gypsy understood that it was time for her to stop, and she stopped.

"If the end is coming," said her mother, gently, — "I don't seem to feel that it is yet, — but if it should, Gypsy, there is Tom."

Gypsy nestled closer to her on the pillow for answer.

"Gypsy, Tom *must* grow up a good man. I cannot *have* it any other way. But it will depend more on you than any other human being. A sister who will always love him, be gentle with him, be patient with him, be womanly and generous for him, teach him that he is a great deal dearer to her than she is to herself, — if he has no mother, Gypsy, he must have that sister."

Gypsy raised her head, her tears quite gone, and said, speaking very solemnly —

“Mother, whether you live or whether you die, I will be that sister.”

That promise, made in the dim light of the sick-room, with the shadows nodding on the walls, and the shadow of the poor, thin face beside her on the pillow, Gypsy will never forget.

But God was merciful, and she did not die; and if she had, He would have been merciful still. To no one in the family was the experience of those few weeks what it was to Gypsy. For the first time in her life she had looked into an open grave; — for we never know nor can know what the words mean until we see one waiting for us or ours; — for the first time in her life she had felt that any one very dear to her *could* die and life go on, and the future come, with always a face in it to be missed, and a touch to be longed for. For the first time in her life, too, she had found out what it was to be very thankful; to fall on her knees with

hidden face, the happy words dying on her lips for wonder that God should choose her for such rich blessing.

Many times in these days she thought of her cousin Joy and her motherless life. She thought that she had understood it before, but now she found that she never had. She wrote to Joy once and told her so.

But the fever had done its work thoroughly, and Mrs. Breynton did not recover as fast as they had hoped. She seemed to be very much shattered by it, and it was many weeks before she was able to leave her bed. After the watchers had been given up, and the nurses had gone, and the neighbors began to come in less frequently to offer help, Gypsy was busy enough. And it was then that there came the trial to her patience and good temper. She must be nurse, and she must be housekeeper ; she must look after Winnie, — and it did seem as if that young gentleman made it a serious

study to require looking after at least once in every five minutes; she must try to make things pleasant for her father, and she must write to Tom. Here lay the rub. It was almost impossible to get time to do it. Her mother's toast must be made, and her father's stockings must be darned; Patty, driven with the extra work, must be helped to set the table and wash the dishes; Winnie must be picked out of the hogshead and the flour-barrel and the coal-bin, cajoled away from the molasses-jug, washed and brushed and mended, respectfully entreated not to stamp through the garret floor while mother was sleeping, and coerced into desisting from pounding Patty with the broom-handle and two pokers. And writing to Tom was obviously more pleasant.

We cannot always do our sowing where we like and as we like; Providence sometimes ploughs a rut for us, and all we have to do is to walk in it; Gypsy found this out before her mother had been sick a month.

But there is almost always a gust of wind or a bird to scatter the grain a little.

Several years after, Gypsy was one day looking over Tom's desk for an envelope, when she came to some bits of paper carefully folded by themselves. Seeing the handwriting she pulled them out.

"Why, Tom Breynton! you never kept these all this time!"

"Rather guess I did, and I wouldn't part with them for a good deal; I'd rather lose all your other letters first. Didn't I know well enough how you used to write them when you ought to be abed, and how tired you were, and hurried and bothered? Well, I guess I did; here, put them back where you found them, Miss!"

They were the tiny notes and scraps of messages which Gypsy had written while her mother was sick.

"Gypsy," said Winnie, one day, stamping

into the room, slamming the door, upsetting two chairs and a table, just as Gypsy had drawn the shutters for her mother's afternoon nap, — “where's my shaving-brush, I'd like to know? I didn't shaved this week, nor last month, and father shaves every day, and you don't know anything about it 'cause you're a girl. Now where is it, sir?”

“Oh, dear,” said Gypsy, hushing him up, “I did hope you'd forget that brush. You've brushed your teeth and your shoes and your hair with it, besides using it to paint the looking-glass with flour paste, and rub vinegar all over the cat, and —”

Winnie interrupted by severely signifying that what he had done with it, or was going to do with it was of no consequence; he should like the brush; “if he didn't have that brush, he'd squeal, he'd stamp, he'd pound, he'd thump, he'd holler awful; would she let him have the brush?”

It was the only way of getting rid of him without a battle, so she took the brush from its hiding-place on the mantel, and Winnie stamped off triumphant.

He came to supper with a very red face.

“What is the matter?” asked Gypsy.

“Oh, nothin’, only I’ve been shaving,” said Winnie, rubbing his cheeks. “I didn’t s’pose it was going to hurt.”

“Hurt? How? What did you shave with?”

“With a brush, of course; you do ask such stupid questions, Gypsy Breynton!”

“Anything besides the brush?”

“Oh, nothing but a case-knife; it was an all notched-up case-knife, too; Patty wouldn’t give me a nice one, — the old thing!”

When Winnie had been in bed about fifteen minutes that night, there suddenly uprose an utterly indescribable shriek, as of one who had been controlling his emotions to the verge of human endurance.

Gypsy rushed up-stairs.

“ Why, Winnie Breynton ! what has happened ? ”

“ They hur-r-rt ! ” sobbed Winnie, who was holding on to his cheeks with both hands.

“ They hurt dreadful, and I wasn’t goin’ to — tell, ’cause father and Tom — never — do ! ”

“ Winnie, what did you shave with, I should like to know ? ”

“ Water.”

“ Nothing else ? ”

No, there was nothing else. What did he put the water in ? An old peach-can that he found on the shelf.

“ On the shelf in the pantry ? — the lower shelf ? ”

“ Yes. I don’t see what there is to laugh at, either.”

Gypsy did her best, but she could not help it.

“ Oh, Winnie Breynton ! I’d been using it to make mother’s mustard-paste ! ”

CHAPTER IX.

STONY PLACES.

RS. Breynton did not become well fast. It took her a long time to get out of bed, a long time to get down stairs, a long time to get out of doors. "It was an obstinate case," repeated the doctor, peering mysteriously at her through his glasses, "and she had very little vitality in rallying from it, very little vitality." Gypsy said, Yes, sir, with a remarkably vague idea what he was talking about, and Winnie wanted to know if vitality meant whiskers.

In fact, it ended in Mrs. Breynton's becoming a confirmed invalid for the winter, very easily excited, and much injured by excitement; very

dependent on rest and quiet, and having things cheerful about her. Thus the family fell into the way of telling her the brightest side of everything, and bearing their little anxieties without her, and thus it came about that she never knew of something which Gypsy did when the college term was about two thirds through.

She had been down to the office one day to carry a letter to Tom from Winnie. Winnie was under the ignominious necessity of getting some one else to write his letters, but he made up for it by originality of material. This particular letter ran as follows: —

“Tell him I want him to bring me some peanuts and candy, sir, and if he can’t afford it, he needn’t, and I want him to bring me two pounds of peanuts and candy. My whiskers don’t grow very fast. Why don’t they? I shaved them one time with the mustard-box. I squealed that night, too. I smash my potatoes myself, to dinner. I like to do it with the

napkin-ring, but Gypsy she won't let me. I know how to tie my shoe-strings in a hard knot, too. Mother's an infidel, and stays in her room pretty much. Nothing else that I can think of. This is from Winnie Breynton, Esq., sir."

Gypsy found in the box a letter for herself. It was from Tom. She was a little surprised, for she had heard from him only two days before. She read it on the way home, folded it with a grieved and puzzled face, put it in her pocket, and said nothing about it to any one. It was no wonder that she was grieved and puzzled.

"MY JEWEL OF A GYPSY:—

I made a rush in Greek yesterday, and the Sophs. are behaving better than they did. Hall came very near getting into trouble with Tutor D., but begged off. I hope mother is better, and that you have gone back to school. Did I ever tell you how much everybody admires your mark in my Bible? I keep it on the table so they can see it.

Look here, Gyp. I've got into a little fix. My funds were low, — very low, — decidedly minus, in fact, though I am sure I cannot tell where it is all gone to, and I borrowed a few dollars of one of the fellows, and expected to pay it back before now; but father says that what I had, ought to have lasted till the end of the term, and he was so vexed (though I didn't tell him what I wanted it for), and *hammers* at me so for being extravagant, that I can't apply to him. I know I've spent too much, and I suppose he gives me all he can afford. I don't want to talk against him, for I suppose this way he has is mostly because he thinks so much of us, and I know I've made him trouble enough; but I don't dare to have him know about this. The fellow wants the money, and has a right to it. It will be a disgrace to me if I don't pay before long; he won't hold his tongue, for he is mad about it. Can you think of any way I can get out of it? Could you get something from mother? I would not write to her, for I did not know but she was too sick. It goes tough to

have her know, anyway. Don't tell her, if it will do her any hurt. Didn't mean ever to have to come to you about such a scrape again, and I haven't paid back your four dollars yet, either. But, to tell the truth, it is a serious fix. I wonder you are not tired to death of being bothered by

Your graceless brother, Tom.'

Gypsy did not know what to do. She lay awake a long time that night, thinking about it, her merry brows knotted, and her red lips drawn into a sorrowful curve. And what she thought was this :

Tom must have the money. It was too bad, — terribly too bad, that he should keep making such good resolves and then forgetting them. He ought not to have borrowed ; he ought not to have needed to borrow ; but he must have the money. If he should not have it, she did not know exactly what would happen, but he certainly intimated that it would be something

very bad. At least he would be disgraced, and whatever that might mean, it would be dreadful to have Tom disgraced. She concluded that they would probably send him to prison. In all the story-books, people went to prison for debt. And to think of Tom in prison! No, he must have the money at any cost.

This was very easy to say ; the thing was, to get it. She had none of her own ; she had lent it all to him before. Of course she could not go to her father. Telling her mother was not to be thought of ; the excitement and pain would throw her back a fortnight. Peace Maythorne could be no help. What was to be done? She tossed about on the bed till eleven o'clock, and was no nearer answering the question than she was at nine. So she went to sleep on it. About midnight she woke up suddenly, and thought of something. She jumped up in the dark and ran to her upper bureau drawer, and pulled it out with a jerk. She

took out a little box, and sat down on the floor by the window, in the pale starlight, and opened it. It was a pretty box, of cedar-wood, inlaid with pearl lilies, and was lined with soft, pink cotton. It held all Gypsy's jewelry. "All" was very little, to be sure, but some of it was quite pretty. There was a cameo pin, — her best one, — with a Beatrice's head on it; there was a tiny gold cross that she sometimes wore around her neck; a coral bracelet fastened by a gold snake, made out of the sleeve-clasps which she had worn when she was a baby; a battered gold heart intended to slip on one of the old-fashioned watch-guards; two gold buttons that one of her aunts had given her several years ago; a lava stud, and a number of rings. These rings ran very much to cornelian and gutta-percha, but there were two handsome ones. One had been her mother's when she was a girl, and was sealed by the least bit of an opal on a gold leaf; this Gypsy wore only

on state occasions. The other, her uncle George had given her; it was a circle of elaborate chasing, and had been originally a very pretty ring. But she had lost it once in the garden, and when it was found, months after, it was tarnished and bent, and had lain on the pink cotton in that condition ever since. When Gypsy had looked all the things over, she took out this ring, the battered heart, the two gold buttons, and the lava stud, and turned them about in her fingers, hesitating.

“I never wear these,” she said, half aloud, “and nobody will ever suspect or wonder, or ask where they’re gone to; Joy might, if she were here, but she isn’t. And I am sure they must be worth as much as ten dollars, and — yes, I’ll do it.”

After that she put away the pearl-inlaid box and went to bed, and thought how much she was like the girls in the story-books.

It chanced that Mr. Breynton was in Bur-

lington for a day or two on business, and Gypsy hesitated a little about what she said to her mother the next day ; but remembered that Tom was in a hurry, and finally said it.

“ Mother, I have been thinking I should like to go over to Vergennes this noon, and match the worsteds for your camp-chair.”

“ To-day, Gypsy ? ”

“ Yes’m ; it is such a perfect day for it, and Mr. Surly says it is going to snow to-morrow. The only thing is, leaving you without father here. I don’t exactly want to.”

“ Oh, I don’t care. It will only be a few hours, and I don’t need anything but what Patty can do for me. If you want to go, you had better.”

Now, if there had been nothing but the worsteds or her own pleasure concerned, Gypsy would not have thought of going till her father was at home. But something more important than worsteds or pleasure was concerned, and

she accepted the permission with a readiness that was very unlike Gypsy ; for she had been very generous and thoughtful ; quick to deny herself anything and everything, since her mother's illness. Mrs. Breynton, though she really did not need her, noticed the difference, and Gypsy felt that she did, and being unable to explain it, was the hardest thing about this Vergennes undertaking.

She started in the noon train, with a very stout-looking purse in her pocket, and one hand holding it tight. It held her money, — change for her fare and bills for her worsteds, — and it also held a battered heart, a ring, two buttons, and a lava stud.

It was a bright, bleak, winter day ; the sun on the snow dazzled her, and the wind blew sharply into her face, as she stepped from the cars and began to wander about the streets of Vergennes. She did not know exactly where to go with her jewelry, and now that it had

come to the point, she dreaded selling it. It was an unpleasant thing to do. It had a mean look, she thought ; she was not poorly dressed, and they would never guess that she could really need the money, and certainly never guess what it was for. Besides, she felt uneasy about doing such a thing without her mother's knowledge. She wished for the twentieth time that Tom had not run in debt. However, it was rather late in the day to begin to be discouraged, so, after she had bought her worsteds, remembering that the girls in the story-book, always took their jewelry to a pawnbroker's, she stopped the first man she met, and asked him if he could tell her where there was a pawnbroker's shop. The man put his hands in his pockets, and his hat on one side of his head, and stared, — at her face, the feather in her hat, her pretty cashmere dress, her ladylike muff, her neatly-gloved hands, and said :

“ Dew tell, now ! ”

“ Can you tell me where there is a pawn-broker’s, sir ? ” repeated Gypsy, reddening. “ I want to sell some jewelry.”

“ Wall, I never ! ” said the man ; “ *you* don’t want nary pawnbroker. Jewellers is the place fur sech pooty little gals. You’ll find one right round the corner ; very genteel jeweller, and fust cousin of mine, too.”

Gypsy thanked him, and walked away as fast as she could. The “ fust cousin ” proved to be a little man with a black moustache. Whether his claims to gentility lay in that, or in his blue satin vest and flaring purple scarf-pin, or in his dingy, dusty shop, or in his stock of flashy jewelry, — largely consisting of brass and paste, — was not quite clear to the inquiring mind. Gypsy looked about her, and was sorry that she had come.

“ What will *you* have to-day, ma’am ? ” asked the jeweller, promptly ; “ ear-rings, bracelets, — finest Etruscan gold, them brace-

lets, — fine assortment of diamonds, stone cameos, and this ruby, ma'am, — the genooine article, worth fifty dollars if it's worth a copper, but seeing it's you, now, I'll let you have it for a song, — I'll say ten dollars, and that'll be throwin' of it away."

"Oh, I wouldn't have you throw it away on me, I'm sure," said Gypsy, with mischief in her eyes. "I don't exactly see how you could afford to lose forty dollars on it either. Besides, I didn't come to buy anything. I came to sell some jewelry."

"Oh, you did, did you?" said the jeweller, with a sudden change of tone; "well, I don't do much in that line. I sometimes take folks' old silver and such to oblige 'em, but it isn't worth nothing to me."

Gypsy had opened her purse, and the trinkets fell out upon the glass show-case. She spread them out, and asked how much he was willing to give her. The jeweller looked them over

with ill-concealed eagerness, and took them up with masterly indifference.

“Hum! — look as if they’d been through the wars; if I was to give you seventy-five cents for ‘em, it would be more than they’re worth.”

“Seventy-five cents!” exclaimed Gypsy; “why, I wouldn’t sell one of the buttons for that,” and she began to put them back in her purse.

“Well, say a dollar, then; come now, that’s fair.”

“No, sir, I don’t think it is fair at all,” said Gypsy, shutting up her purse very fast.

“Dollar and a quarter, then, — call it a bargain.” But Gypsy walked right out of the shop.

She strolled about awhile, feeling discurraged enough, but Gypsy-like, more provoked that anybody should try to cheat her, till at last she stumbled upon another jeweller’s, — a handsome

store, large, and clean, and well-lighted, with a display of watches and silver in the windows. So she pulled out her purse again and went in.

There was a well-dressed man behind the counter, who had a very singular smile. Gypsy noticed it before she had shut the door, and was so absorbed in looking at it that she forgot what she had come for, and never said a word.

“How can I serve you?” said the man, politely.

“Oh, how do you do?” said Gypsy, reddening.

“I’m very well, I thank you,” said the jeweller, his singular smile becoming so very singular, that Gypsy was more confused than ever. She felt as if he were making fun of her, and she knew that she had said a stupid thing; so, by way of making up for it, with her face on fire, she broke out —

“I want to sell a heart and some buttons for my brother — that is — I mean — well, *do* you

pay people for old jewelry? That's what I mean."

Well, it depended on the quality; sometimes he did and sometimes he didn't; he would look at anything she might have and tell her. So out came the heart and the buttons, the ring and the lava stud, a second time. The jeweller took them up one by one, examined them carefully, laid them down, and said, looking as if he were relieving himself of some excellent joke, that he would give her two dollars and a half for the whole.

"Why, I expected to get ten, just as much as could be!" said Gypsy.

"Two dollars and a half is all they're worth, Miss," repeated the jeweller, and his remarkable smile broadened and grew to such an extent that Gypsy's indignation got the better of her politeness.

"I should like to know what you're laughing at, if you please! I don't see anything so very funny!"

"Oh, nothing, nothing. I beg your pardon ; only to think that you expected ten dollars ! but nothing is the matter at all."

"Then you won't give me any more than two dollars and a half!" said Gypsy, faintly, her ripe, red lips quivering with disappointment. Two dollars and a half would never pay the debt. Poor Tom, poor Tom !

Just then a customer opened the door ; a step strangely familiar sounded on the floor behind her ; a heavy hand was laid upon her shoulder.

Gypsy started, turned, and **screamed**.

It was her father.

CHAPTER X.

VARIOUS MATTERS.

THE hot, crimson blood rushed all over her face, down her neck, out to the tips of her fingers. If he had caught her stealing, she could not have looked more guilty. In a minute she remembered herself, and tried to laugh as if nothing unusual were going on.

“ Why, father ! Where on earth did you drop down from ? ”

“ I am just on my way home from Burlington, and had a little business here. I did not expect to find you. What brought you over ? and what are you buying there ? ”

“ I came over to get mother some **worsted** ;

that is—yes, I've been buying her ~~some~~ worsteds for her camp-chair."

"But these are not worsteds."

Gypsy looked the other way and stood still, and the jeweller seemed to think that it was very funny.

"What were you doing, Gypsy? buying some jewelry? Does your mother know about it?"

Gypsy picked up the trinkets and never said a word. What should she say? Her father began to look displeased.

"Gypsy," said he, gravely, "what does all this mean?"

Gypsy, bewildered, frightened, hardly knowing what she said, broke out:—

"No, sir, I wasn't buying, I was selling,—just some little things that belong to me, and mother always lets me do what I want with my things, and the man wouldn't give me but two dollars and a half, and that won't half pay it.

and — I mean, I don't want Tom to go to prison, and — Oh, dear, let's go home now."

"Put those things back into your purse," said her father, sternly. Gypsy obeyed in silence, and in silence they went out of the store and left the jeweller smiling still.

Mr. Breynton took the road to the dépôt, walking in great strides that Gypsy could scarcely keep up with. For a few moments he said nothing to her, and his silence frightened her more than anything he could have said.

"Gypsy!" he began, at last, and Gypsy trembled all over, "Gypsy, I don't understand this thing, and I want you to explain it, the whole of it."

Gypsy knew that she must obey, and it seemed to her as if her breath stopped coming. What would Tom say? Oh, what would he? She spoke her thought for answer, and it was the best answer that she could have made: —

"Oh, father, I don't know what Tom will

say to me ! He wouldn't have had you know for the world, not for the world, and mother was too sick to tell, and so I had to do it all alone, and —”

“ Do what all alone ? ” interrupted her father, severely ; “ what is this about Tom ? What has he done ? ”

“ He borrowed a little money, — I don't believe it was very much, but he borrowed it, ” said Gypsy, faintly, “ and he couldn't pay, and I was afraid he would have to go to prison, and so I thought I'd sell my heart and things, — it was a real old heart, and jammed up where Winnie bit it and I stamped on it when we were little, you know, ” she added, her eyes twinkling in spite of her fright and grief.

“ So Tom has run in debt, and been to you to pay it ! ”

Mr. Breynton's eyes flashed, and there was a terrible sound in his voice. Gypsy did not dare to say a word.

“I should like to know how long this has been going on !”

“Oh, not long, sir, not very long, and Tom was so sorry, and I know he didn’t mean to, and I never cared a bit for the heart, you know, and the ring was all black lying out in that funny little chink under the fence.”

There was a silence. Mr. Breynton strode rapidly on, and Gypsy had to run to keep up with him.

“I should like to know,” he said, suddenly, “what you meant by saying that Tom wouldn’t have me know for the world, but would have told his mother if she had been fit to hear such a disgraceful story.”

“Why, you know, Tom thinks you — you don’t take things just like mother,” said honest Gypsy, afraid that she was going to be disrespectful, but not knowing any other way than to tell the truth. “Sometimes you are very much displeased, you know, and you talk to

him a good deal and he gets angry, — and of course that's very wrong in him ; but then he seems to get along better with mother ; and he said he knew he had no business to have borrowed, but he didn't dare to have you know, and you see, sir, I wasn't to say a word about it, and I don't know what he will do."

Mr. Breynton made no answer, but strode on faster than ever, his face flushing and paling and working strangely. Gypsy wondered what he was thinking ; whatever it was, she never knew, nor any one else, perhaps.

"I do hope you won't scold him very hard," she ventured, at last, in a very faint voice. "He didn't mean to, oh, I know he didn't mean to."

"Do you think you have been doing right to start off in this way without the knowledge of either your mother or father, selling jewelry in the stores to help him when he doesn't deserve to be helped? That money was really

stolen from me, as much as it will be stolen from his class-mate if it is not paid. He knew I hadn't it for him to spend," said Mr. Breyn-ton, taking no notice of what she said.

"I'm sure I don't know," said poor Gypsy. "I was so troubled and bothered, and I wanted to tell mother. I tried to do right, anyway."

She raised her great brown eyes just then, and nobody looking into them could doubt it. Her father did not, and he spoke more gently.

"Well, well, my child, I hope so. Tom makes us all a great deal of trouble. I don't understand it. I'm sure I have taken care enough of that boy."

Gypsy might have said a thing or two to that, if she had not been his daughter; but she did something that was much better. She began to plead again — and Gypsy made a very pretty pleader — for Tom.

"You know, father, he will never do it again as long as he lives, never, and he is so

dreadfully sorry and ashamed and all, and if he gets angry, and goes and acts worse after it, why, I should cry so, father!"

Her father drew her hand up into his, his nervous face pale and puzzled and grave.

"He has done wrong, Gypsy, and I must tell him so. But I will be gentle with him, and I will pay the debt this time, though I never shall again. Now, my child, I hope you will conceal nothing of this sort from me after this."

"I didn't suppose you would be so nice," said Gypsy, drawing a very long breath; "if I had supposed you'd be so nice, I should have wanted to tell and have it over, right straight off."

Towards the end of the term, Tom came out with a new idea. He wanted to go into the army. His letters home were filled with it, and the more his father opposed it, the more Tom insisted. The boy was too young, said

Mr. Breynton, and said rightly ; it would be the ruin of him, body and soul ; the Government neither required nor needed such sacrifices yet ; if the war lasted till he was twenty, he might go ; not a month before.

But so many of the fellows were going, reasoned Tom ; everybody was talking about it, since that last defeat at the West ; two of his own class-mates had left within a fortnight ; he felt so *mean* to stay at home. Sometimes his letters would come embellished with flags and shields and various national devices of his own painting ; sometimes he copied for Gypsy certain stirring patriotic songs which were popular in college, and privately instructed her to sing them to her father every night when he came home from the store. Once in a while he undertook a very particular appeal to his mother, but received for answer only a gentle “ I am sorry, my son, but I agree with your father perfectly about this thing. We do not think it

best for you to go till you are older and stronger. Then if you are needed, we would not keep you back a moment. Try to be a good boy meantime, and wait patiently."

Finally Tom had to content himself with sly hints and inuendoes, and with the most remarkable patriotic orations, covering sixteen pages of note-paper, in which the Star-Spangled Banner and the American Eagle figured largely. These, sublime abstractions were evidently intended as a severe and dignified way of stinging the family conscience. In a confidential note to Gypsy, he said once, what he had not said to any one else. " You see Gypsy, I'm sick of college through and through. I haven't taken the stand, nor behaved the way I meant to, and I wish I were out of it once for all."

So the winter passed, and the spring vacation came, and Tom with it. The army question had rather subsided, and they thought he had forgotten it. But once or twice, when the sub-

ject was mentioned, Gypsy, looking up suddenly, caught an expression in his eye which made her doubt and think.

Somebody made up a party one bright day to visit Belden's Falls, and Tom and Gypsy were of it. The Rowes were there, and the Guests, the Holmans, Miss Cardrew, and Mr. Guernsey,—nearly all the teachers and scholars of the High School, and many of Tom's old friends. The day was charming, and the company was charming, and the Falls were *so* interesting, Delia said. The ride was a long one, and led through sunny valleys, where the early birds were singing, up rocky hills where the carriages jolted and the girls screamed, through patches of forest cooled by the snow that still lay in the hollows and under the shadow of the walls.

They drove into the woods that surrounded the Falls, tied their horses, and voted to walk the rest of the way, through the cool, damp shadow and the perfume of the pines. Not

that they thought very much about perfume or shadow. Tom and Francis were telling college stories, and after the fashion of a party of very young people, they were fast getting into a "gale," when they turned a sudden corner and stopped.

A flash of light, a roar, a dizziness, — and there it all was. A sheer fall of foam broken and tossed about by huge, black, jagged rocks ; the stealthy under-current showing through in green, swift lines ; showers of spray falling in feathers, breaking in bubbles, flashing into silver, touched into gold ; and, spanning the roar and brightness and bewilderment, a tiny rainbow, quivering, like a thing imprisoned. Above, the terrible rushing on of the black current to its fall, through gorges and caverns, through sunlight and shade, — a thing untamed and untamable. Beyond, the tree-tops tossing, and a sky with silver clouds.

" Oh, I never ! Isn't it *sweet pretty* ? He, he, ha ! " said Delia Guest.

“ Elegant ! splendid ! *beautiful* ! Why, now handsome it is ! ” from Sarah.

Gypsy had thrown off her hat, — she was sure she could not have told why, — and stood with it hanging by one string from her dropped hands, her face upturned, her eyes as still as a statue’s.

“ Look at Gypsy Breynton ! ” said somebody, presently. “ Why don’t you talk, for pity’s sake ? ”

“ Oh ! ” said Gypsy, with a jump ; “ yes, — I forgot. What was it you wanted ? ”

They looked to their hearts’ content, and looked again, and went away and came back and looked again ; they crawled round into the cave, and threw stones into the boiling vortex, and tried to measure the sides of the gorge with a fish-line, and crouched where they could feel the spray on their faces, and explored the wooded banks, and crossed the tiny foot-bridge that hung, old and trembling, over a chasm

where the black water lay two or three hundred feet down.

"I feel so sorry for it," said Gypsy, as she stood looking down, leaning rather recklessly on the frail railing.

"Sorry for it!" called Sarah, from a safe place on the bank, — she said that the bridge made her nervous.

"Why, it looks so like a great creature leaping along to be killed," said Gypsy, under her breath. Sarah stared, and wanted to know if she read that in a fairy story.

"Oh, look at Tom Breynton!" called one of the Holmans, suddenly. He had crawled to the very edge of the chasm, past some trees and a bush or two, and was sitting on a sharp, projecting rock, both feet hanging down, and his hands in his pockets. Of course everybody exclaimed, and the girls screamed, which was, probably, exactly what Tom wanted.

"Tom, I don't like to look at you very

much," said Gypsy, quietly; she had not any of that way which so many sisters have, of worrying Tom if she thought that he was doing a dangerous thing. She knew that he was old enough and sensible enough to take care of himself; and, further, that boys don't like to be interfered with by their younger sisters "before folks;" and, also, that boys will do things that girls cannot do, and dangerous things, and be hurt or not, as the chance may be, and that there is no more use in trying to stop them than there would be in putting down a little pine branch into that great writhing current, to dam it up. So she said what she had to say, and then let him alone.

"Look the other way, then," said Tom, coolly, leaning far over, with both hands in his pockets; it did have an ugly look, — as if a breath would blow him off.

Gypsy made him no answer, but she pressed forward, instinctively, to watch him, leaned

heavily upon the railing, and it cracked with a loud, sharp noise.

Tom heard it and sprang. Gypsy was on the shore at a bound, safe enough, and the bridge, too. Tom, with his hands encumbered, slipped and fell.

There was a cry, — the vacant rock, — and horrible silence.

Into it a groan broke, and Gypsy, leaning over with rigid face, where all the rest had fallen back to make room for her, saw that the rock shelved and jutted eight feet down, into a narrow ledge. Tom, swinging by the bush with one free hand, had fallen here, and lay helpless, one ankle sprained by a cruel twist in a crevice.

Mr. Guernsey was gone already for a rope, and they drew him up and drove him slowly home, and — well, I am inclined to think that Tom said his prayers that night.

The sprain proved to be a severe one; the

doctor ordered him to the sofa, and to the sofa he had to go. The result was, that he lost several weeks of the beginning of the term.

This was time and soil for Gypsy's sowing, and she made the most of it.

It was vacation, so that she had most of her time to herself, and she delivered it over entire to Tom. Perched on a high, round stool without a back, with her feet on the rounds, and her head on one side like a canary, she sat by his sofa hour after hour, and read to him, and sang to him, and talked to him, and played chess with him. She ran on errands for him, she made him lemonade and whips and jellies, she saved up every scrap of news that she could gather for him, she ran all over town to borrow novels for him,—she became, in fact, for patience, and gentleness, and persistent care, such a model of a little sister as astonished Tom beyond measure. Not that she never made any blunders. She would scarcely have been Gypsy

If she had not tipped over his lemonade, shut up flies into his books, joggled cold water down his neck, and lost the pins out of his bandages. Nor was it by any means as easy to be a model little sister as might be supposed. In spite of her love for Tom, play was play, and to sit up on a round stool and read Cooper's novels aloud, when the sun was shining, and Sarah Rowe was paddling about in the orchard swamp alone, was hard enough sometimes. Moreover, a sick boy is very much like a caged panther, and Tom, to tell the truth, was once in a while — a little — cross. He voted it a bore, this lying on sofas, at least twenty times a day, and in by no means the most cheerful of tones ; he was sure that his bandage was too tight one minute, and confident that it was too loose the next ; he pronounced the lemonade too sour, and the whips not as good as they were yesterday ; he wished that Gypsy would not read so fast. No, that was too slow, now ; it sounded like Dr. Prouty

preaching a two-hours' Fast-Day sermon. Now, why need she keep coughing and wriggling about? and what *was* the use in making up such unearthly faces over the long words?"

"Then you see, I get mad sometimes," Gypsy told Peace, "and I fire up and say something horrid, and then I'm just as sorry, and I go right at him and squeeze him and kiss him, and he says he didn't mean to, and that I'm too good to a fellow, and I say I didn't mean to, and I squeeze him again, and we're both of us sorry, and after that I go down town and get him a pint of peanuts, and you ought to see us eat them!"

So the weeks passed, and what Tom thought of Gypsy at the end of them, he managed partly to tell her one Sunday night when they were alone together.

"I say, Gyp."

"Well?"

"Look here."

"I'm looking as hard as I can; it's pitch total! I can't see a thing but two boots (they want blacking dreadfully), *not* in the place where boots ought to be, — all skewed up on top of the parlor sofa."

"Gypsy, I was undertaking to talk sense."

"You were? Well, I never! Do let me call in father and mother, — they would be so taken by surprise."

"Yes, ma'am, I was. I was going to say that you have been a good girl since I've been shut up here."

"Oh!" said Gypsy, with a change of tone.

"A good girl," repeated Tom, "and what with your jellies and novels and bandages, you've treated me better than I deserve. I vote you a firstrate fellow. Give us a kiss, will you?"

Gypsy gave him the kiss, and thought about it.

"What would you give, to see me in a blue

uniform, with a musket on my shoulder, or a sword, perhaps, and a red sash, taking a rebel fort and getting into the newspapers, and doing up glory, and Hail Columbia, and all the rest of it, — be a little proud of your good-for-nothing brother, maybe ? ”

“ Yes,” said Gypsy, with flashing eyes, “ of course I should. But you’re not a good-for-nothing, and soldiers are so apt to get killed, you know. Besides, mother won’t let you, and I had rather be proud of you at college, a great deal. I expect you will do splendidly this term, don’t you ? ” she added, confidentially.

“ Hum,” said Tom, in a queer tone, and broke out whistling. Gypsy could not see his face in the dark.

“ You know Yankee Doodle *isn’t* — exactly — Sunday, Tom dear,” she ventured, at last. “ No, nor John Brown’s Body, nor Dixie, either, Tom Breynton ! Old Hundred ? Yes, that will do. I wonder if it would be wicked for me to whistle alto ? ”

Whenever Gypsy proposed to whistle, Tom's musical tendencies came to an untimely end, and this occasion proved no exception.

CHAPTER XI.

A STAMP IN THE WRONG CORNER.



DAY or two before Tom went back to college, the children were all sitting together one morning in Mrs. Breyneton's room, when their father came in from the post office with an open letter in his hand.

“Oh, I guess that’s a letter from my coal-man,” remarked Winnie, with the nonchalance of a business man of untold epistolary experience. “I ordered two tons and a pint tipped into my cellar, only Mrs. Winnie she said it wasn’t enough to keep the children warm, and then I tell you we got mad, and I just told her she wasn’t anything but a woman, and she kept still after *that*, sir !”

"From Uncle George?" asked Gypsy, looking up from her work. "Oh, what did Joy do about those satin slippers, and what did he give her on her birthday?" but then she stopped. She had seen, and every one else had seen by this time, the dark sternness of her father's face.

"Thomas, I should like to have you read that."

Tom took the letter, read it, dropped it, grew very pale.

It fell on the floor by Gypsy's chair. She saw that it was a printed circular, so she picked it up and read: —

"DAVID BREYNTON, Esq.: —

SIR: The bill of Mr. Thomas Breynton, for the last Collegiate term, has not been paid. This notice is given in obedience to a law of the College, which provides that 'If any student shall fail to pay, within two weeks after the close of any vacation, his bills of the preceding term, it

shall be the duty of the Treasurer to give immediate notice thereof to the Bondsman of such Student, unless the latter shall have deposited with the Treasurer a certificate from his Bondsman or Guardian, that the means of payment have not been furnished him, or shall have presented to the Treasurer a satisfactory reason for the delay.'

Your obedient servant,

— — — TR."

"Well," said Mr. Breynton, "what have you to say for yourself?"

Tom had not a word to say for himself. He sat with his eyes upon the ground, his face still very pale.

"I should like to know why your tuition was not paid," insisted his father. Tom tried to whistle, failed miserably, put his hands in his pockets, and walked over to the window.

"Meant to pay it this term," he said sulkily. "My money got played out some way or other,

I'm sure I haven't the fraction of an idea how, and I meant to start fresh when I went back, and pay it. I don't know how I was to know that the old fellow must come and tell you."

"So first you were guilty of a meanness both to your instructors and to me, and then you resorted to a deception to hide it."

"There wasn't any deception about it!" broke out Tom, angrily. "I meant to pay it up honest, I say, and I didn't tell you, because it was of no use to anybody that I see, and then I knew you would make such a—"

"Tom!" interrupted his mother's sorrowful voice, and Tom stopped. When he had stopped, he saw Gypsy's eyes, and his face flushed.

"You may come into the library, Thomas, and we will talk this over," said his father, excitedly. They went out and shut the door.

Winnie, who in the excitement had put his coal-basket on his head and forgotten to take it off, looked after them with his mouth open, and

Gypsy and her mother looked at each other and never said a word.

Tom was shut up with his father until dinner-time, and a violent headache brought on by the excitement of the morning, kept Mrs. Breynston in her room all day. Gypsy wandered mournfully about the house, shut herself upstairs, and tried to cry a little, tried to play with Winnie, tried to make Tom talk, and failing in all, went at last to Peace Maythorne. There, in the quiet room, in sight of the quiet eyes, the tears came, and comfort too.

Yet, after all, there were very many boys much worse than Tom. He was thoughtless, rather than vicious, — too much intent on being as well-dressed as anybody, on heading subscriptions, and patronizing first-class clubs, and “treating” generously; over-desirous to be set down as “a good fellow;” more anxious to be *popular* than to be a good scholar, like many another open-hearted, open-handed, merry

boy; moreover, a little afraid to say No. Yet, as I said, by no means vicious. Faithful to his promise to Gypsy, he had left off all manner of sipping and pledging in brandies and wines; had met question, laugh, and sneer, and met them like a man; of his incipient gambling he had soon wearied; his sense of honor was his stronghold, and that was crossed by it sadly. As for the smoking, — though I am not including that very disagreeable habit among the *vices*, — angry as he had been about it, he had been cornered by his father's command; the discomfort of doing a thing, as he said, “upon the sly,” was rather more than the cigars were worth.

Extravagance and laziness were what ailed him now, — two rather treacherous *compagnons de voyage* for a college-boy. Judging from the record of these two terms, what would they have done for him when the four years were over? Gypsy used to wonder sometimes, her

bright cheeks paling as she asked herself the question.

Perhaps she need not have been as much afraid as she was, of having Tom with Francis Rowe. He did not seem to fancy Francis as much as he had done six months ago. From certain mysterious hints that he dropped once or twice, and from the expression of his face, Gypsy inferred that that young gentleman's recent career at the Halls of Learning had been such as to disgust even thoughtless Tom.

One day, when Tom had been back at college a little over a week, Gypsy came slowly home from Peace Maythorne's, with troubled eyes. This sultry spring weather was doing Peace no good. She had grown very weak and almost sleepless from continued pain.

"She looks like a ghost this morning," said Gypsy, coming into her mother's room. "so thin, and pale, and patient, and sweet, it almost made me cry to look at her. I don't see why those old doctors can't do something for her."

"They do all they can," said Mrs. Breynton. "These diseases in the spine are very hard to manage. But it does seem as if Peace had a great deal of suffering, poor child!"

"It has made an angel of her, anyway," said Gypsy, emphatically. "I told Tom the other day, she made me feel like a little mean caterpillar crawling round in the mud beside her. I'm going to write to him again to-day. He always wants to know how Peace is. Hilloa Winnie! — a letter?"

"From Tom!"

"Yes, for you."

Mrs. Breynton took it, stopping a moment to look at the envelope.

"How blurred the post-marks do get! This doesn't look any more like New Haven than it does like Joppa, does it, Gypsy?"

"No, and just look at the stamp, skewed clear over there in the left-hand corner. How funny!"

"Tom is always very particular about his

stamp, and all the getting up of his letters. He must have been in a great hurry," said his mother, breaking the seal. Evidently he was in a hurry, for the letter was undated. She read, with Gypsy looking over her shoulder.

"**MY DEAREST MOTHER:**—

I don't know what you will think of me, and it is rough work telling you, but I've done it, — I've enlisted.

I left New Haven day before yesterday, and enlisted as a private here at Washington this morning, in the —— regiment, and expect to be sent to the front to-morrow.

I couldn't stand it any longer. So many of the fellows were off, and I wasn't doing anything at college, and I was ashamed of myself, and I knew you were all ashamed of me. I can shoulder a musket and obey orders, and perhaps — who knows? — take some prisoners, and get noticed by the General. At any rate, I can die at my post, if there is any necessity, and that is

better than nothing, and I shouldn't bother you any more.

There ! I had no business to say that, mother. I don't expect to be killed, either. I expect to have a jolly time, and I think serving your country is a great deal better than flunking in Homer.

The only thing about it is, I am afraid you will feel so, and Gypsy. I didn't much like doing it after you had said No, but I must do it on the sly or not go at all, and I set my heart on going, before the end of last term.

I won't drink, mother, nor learn to swear, nor any of the rest of it. I promise you I will be a better fellow than I was in College, and be double the use in the world, and you *shall* be proud of me some day. Tell Gypsy so, and tell her not to cry, and to think the best she can of me. She is a jewel, and I don't like disappointing her, nor you either. I do hope it won't make you worse. I don't know what father will say ; couldn't make up my mind to write to him. I thought he wouldn't mind it quite so much if you told him. Please give him my love if he will take it, and

tell him you will all see the day when you will think that I have done the best way. Give Winnie a kiss for me, and tell him my gun is taller than he is. Will write again as soon as I get to camp, and tell you how to direct.

I do want to hear soon, and find out whether you can forgive

Your Son,

Tom.

P. S. I am very well,—never better in my life,—and should be very happy if I only knew what you were going to say about it. I suppose you will think I have done wrong ; well, anyway, it can't be helped now.

T. B."

CHAPTER XII.

QUIET EYES.

TWO girls, with hands clasped, and cheeks laid softly together; the one with her bloodless lips and pale, gold hair and shrunken hands; the other round and rosy and brown, with her dark eyes snapping, and that canary poise to her head, and the morning sunlight over both, — it made a very pretty picture.

But neither of them was thinking anything about that; which was the charm of it.

“ Peace, you are so white this morning. — do turn your face out of that sunbeam; it makes you look worse.”

Peace smiled, and moved her head.

“ Why, it doesn’t do the least good ! The sun always goes wherever you do. Peace Maythorne, I should like — well, I think I should like to pound that doctor with a tack-hammer, and then put some cayenne pepper on his handkerchief, and then pinch him, and then choke him a little, — just a little, not enough to be impolite, exactly, you know.”

“ He does all he can for me,” said Peace, laughing, “ and he is very kind, I’m sure.”

“ If it weren’t for his whiskers,” considered Gypsy, “ such solemn-looking things ! They look like grave-stones, exactly, — little black slate grave-stones, fringed on the edge.”

“ He’s good enough to her, I’m sure,” observed Aunt Jane, who sat sewing by the window, “ and what with the jelly, and tongue, and books, and nobody knows what not, your ma keeps sendin’ her, I don’t think Peace has much to complain of.”

“ Perhaps you would, if you had to lie from

morning to night with a pain in your back, and your father and mother dead, and nobody to"— began Gypsy, with flashing eyes, and stopped. Then there was the old story over again,— Peace was grieved, and Aunt Jane was angry, and Gypsy was sorry. Presently Aunt Jane went out on an errand, and Gypsy said so. Peace sighed, but made no answer. Only after a time, she said something, half to herself, about "a little while," that Gypsy did not exactly understand.

"The worse you feel, the more of an angel you are," said Gypsy, in a pause.

"Oh, Gypsy!"

"Yes you are," nodded Gypsy, "and I'm cross and bothered and worried about Tom, and, put it all together, I don't begin to have as hard a time as you. When I come here, and look right into your eyes, I am so ashamed of myself,—why, I'm so ashamed, Peace!"

Peace raised her quiet eyes, and then she

turned them away, for they had grown suddenly dark and dim.

“ But I don’t have anything but myself to bear, Gypsy. It is a great deal easier to take things ourselves, than to see them coming on somebody we love so very dearly.”

“ Yes,” said Gypsy, thinking for the moment how thankful she would be if she could be the soldier in Tom’s place ; or how it seemed as if she would go to bed and lie there like Peace, if she could only make Tom the noble, principled, successful man that he might be ; that she was afraid at times he would never be. “ Ye-es ; but then, you see, *I have Tom, to begin with.*”

And Peace said nothing to that.

Presently, she wanted to know what they heard from him.

“ Well, we had a letter day before yesterday, and he said he was pretty well, and was over that terrible neuralgia, — he has had it almost ever since he has been there. But he thought

there was going to be another fight, and so, you know, I have to go and think about it, and mother sits up-stairs in the dark, and I know she's been crying, as well as I want to."

Peace did not say, "Oh, he won't get hurt. He wasn't last time. The way not to have a thing happen is not to expect it. Look on the bright side, &c., &c., &c." That sorry sort of sympathy it was not her fashion to give. Of course it was as possible for Tom to be wounded as any one else, and she could not have deluded Gypsy into thinking it was not, if she had tried. But she turned and kissed the cheek that was touching hers.

"It was so dreadful at first," said Gypsy, who, when she once began to talk to Peace about Tom, never knew where to stop; "you see, father, — I guess I told you, didn't I? — well, he was so angry. I never saw him look so in all my life. He said Tom was a disgrace to the family, and he said he would go right on

and bring him home, — Tom is under age, you know, and he could do it, and I was so terribly afraid he would, and that would make Tom just as wicked as he could be, I know, he'd be so angry. But mother talked him over. Well, then he sat right down and wrote a letter to Tom, and I never saw what was in it, but I guess it was awful. I don't believe but what mother talked him round not to send that, too, for I saw her tearing up some letter-paper that night, and she was just as pale! But by-and-by father didn't seem to be angry, but just sorry. He was walking back and forth, back and forth, in the entry, and he never knew I saw him, and he shut up his hands together tight, and once I heard him groan right out loud, and say 'Poor boy, poor boy!' and you'd better believe I thought I was going to cry. Then did I tell you about our having prayers?"

"No."

"Didn't? Well, that was the worst of it.

You see they had been shut up together almost all the afternoon and evening, talking it over, I suppose, — he and mother, I mean, — and nobody ate any supper but Winnie (he ate six slices of bread and two baked apples, and wanted to know if Tom got killed if he couldn't have his gun), and I couldn't go to bed, and Winnie wouldn't, — he acted just as if it was a holiday, and said he was going to sit up till nine o'clock, because Tom had gone to the wars ; -- so we just sat round and looked at each other, and it grew dark, and we could hear them talk-talking up-stairs, and it was dreadful. Then when Winnie saw me feeling for my handkerchief, he began to think he must cry too ; so he stood up against the wall, and opened his mouth, and set up such a shout, — it was enough to wake the dead ! and I had enough to do hushing him up, but it made me laugh, and I couldn't help it to save me. Well, then, it kept growing darker, and pretty soon they came

down, and father called in Patty, just as if somebody were dead or something, and told her that Mr. Tom had enlisted ; then he sent her out, and we all sat down, and he said : ‘ Children, Tom has done wrong, and we are sorry ; but we have decided to let him stay in the army if he wishes, and now we will pray God to bless it to him, and to bring him home to us if it be His will.’ And then we all knelt down, and he began to pray, and I tell you, Peace, he loves Tom Breynton ! I did wish Tom could have heard him, and then, perhaps, he would forget about some of the times he has worried him so. I guess we were all choking before we got up,— except Winnie ; he was sound asleep on the floor when we went to pick him up.

“ So after that they wrote to Tom, but I don’t know what they said, and we all wrote to him, and his next letter sounded dreadfully sorry. Now I believe something, Peace Maythorne.”

“ What is it ? ”

" Well, Tom is just sick of it, only he won't say so."

" Why, what makes you think that?"

" Oh, he keeps praising it up so much, for one thing. When Tom likes a thing first-rate, he doesn't keep talking about it. Then once in a while he lets out a sentence about the rations being rather different from mother's sponge cake and mince pies, and he says the marches tire him dreadfully. Then there's the neuralgia. He's real patriotic, Tom is, and just as brave; but mother says he isn't strong enough for it, and father says such young boys always go more from love of adventure than anything else, and almost always wish they had stayed at home. He says they don't help the Government either, getting sick and filling the hospitals, and what we want in the army is *men*. But as long as he has gone, I hope he will take a prisoner or something. He likes to get funny letters from home, and so I drew a picture last week of a

great, big, lean, lank, long Reb., with Tom coming up about to his knee, and standing up on a barrel to arrest him."

" You write to him often, I suppose ? " asked Peace.

" Oh, yes, Tom likes it. And I tell him all the news ; he likes that. And I tell him I love him pretty much ; and he likes that. We send quantities of letters, and some he gets and some he doesn't. But we get almost all his. But the thing of it is, Peace Maythorne, Francis Rowe says everybody in the army drinks and swears before they are out of it, and then the papers do tell such dreadful things about the battles, and I think, and go to bed thinking, and wake up thinking."

" Gypsy," said Peace, in a tone that had a new thought in it.

" Well ? "

" You love Tom ever so much."

" Um — a little — yes."

"And you are a real good sister to him, I think."

"Don't know about that," said Gypsy, winking; "sometimes I'm horrid, and sometimes I'm not; it's just as it happens."

"I've been wondering—" said Peace, and hesitated.

"Wondering what?"

Peace raised her still eyes, and Gypsy looked into them.

"Wondering if you have helped him *every* way you can."

"I don't understand exactly."

"There's one way I was thinking about. I mean—if you should tell God about him."

"Oh!"

The quiet eyes looked at Gypsy, and Gypsy looked at them. Perhaps for an instant Peace was almost sorry that she had said what she had,—a little uncertain how Gypsy was going to take it. But the quiet eyes showed nothing

of this ; they held Gypsy's fast by their stillness and their pureness, and did for her what they always did.

“ Peace Maythorne — ” after a pause. “ I should like to know what made you think of saying that to me.”

“ Oh, I don't know. I was only wondering, and thinking ; nothing seems of very much use without it.”

Gypsy swung her hat round by the strings, and tapped the floor with one foot.

“ Well, I suppose I haven't, exactly, — no. I say Our Father every day — 'most ; only sometimes I'm sleepy. I say something about Tom once in a while, but I never supposed it was going to make any difference. Besides, I'm so wicked and horrid.”

Peace made no answer.

“ Now I suppose you mean, here I've been doing and worrying for Tom all this time, and it is all of no account, then ? ”

"Oh, no; it is of a great deal of account. Only if you see a man drowning, and throw him out planks and branches and straws and shavings, and there is a boat there you could have just as well as not?"

"Hum," said Gypsy, — "yes. I see."

There was a silence. Peace broke it.

"I expect I've bothered you with my sober talk. But I thought — I didn't know as I should have another chance."

"Another chance!" echoed Gypsy, mystified. Peace turned her head over with a sudden motion, and did not answer.

"Peace, what did you mean? Alarmed at the silence, Gypsy climbed up on the bed to see what was the matter.

They had talked too long, and Peace had fainted away.

"She has these turns pretty nigh 'most every day now," said Aunt Jane, coming in and emptying half the water-pitcher upon her move-

less face, — not roughly, but very much as she would gather a skirt or cut button-holes ; as if it were part of the business of life, and life meant business, and love was a duty, — a crippled orphan or a **shirt-bosom**, it was all the same.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VOICE UPON THE SHORE.

NE night, not long after that talk with Peace, Gypsy had a dream. It was a strange dream.

It seemed to be nearly two thousand years ago, and she was living, and Peace, and Tom, and Winnie ; and their home was in Judea. Tom was a young Rabbi, and Winnie was in the Temple at Jerusalem, educating, like Samuel, for the Priesthood ; her father and mother were buried in the Cave of Machpelah, and she and Peace were Jewish maidens, and lived in a little vine-covered house by the banks of silver Kedron. It was a very pleasant house, though very small and simply furnished. From the

door she could look over to Jerusalem, and see the sun light the towers of the Temple, and from the windows she could watch the hills, and the shadows on them, and the paths worn up ; there was a certain awe about those paths ; she wondered in the dream who wore them, but she did not seem to know.

The bed for Peace was drawn up by the window, and Peace lay always (as she always had since Gypsy had known her) still upon the pillows, with folded hands. Tom used to carry her out into the air sometimes, and lay her down upon the grass beneath the palm-trees, and Gypsy would run and shout, and roam away over the brook and up the mountains, and Peace could never go, but lay under the palm-trees, weak and white, with wistful eyes. And once it chanced that they were together, she and Peace alone, on a long, smooth beach, with the blue waves of Galilee singing and sighing up about their feet, and singing and sighing out

to dash against the prows of boats from which bronzed fishermen were casting nets.

Peace was lying upon the sands, and Gypsy had made her a pillow of sea-mosses, and the light was falling full upon her face, and resting in a line of gold upon the water. Peace was watching this line of gold, and Gypsy was braiding her hair into the plaits the Jewish maidens wore, and it chanced that neither heard the stepping of near feet upon the sand.

As they sat there talking softly with each other, and looking off to the line of gold, and listening to the singing and the sighing of the waves, a sudden light fell on them, and One stood there smiling, and took the hand of Peace, and spoke to her. The words He said were few and strange: — “ Maiden, I say unto thee, arise.”

Gypsy hearing, turned in wonder to see who it could be that was mocking the helplessness of Peace, but He had gone. And standing

where He had stood was Peace, upright, erect, and strong, with color in her cheeks and brightness in her eyes,—free to walk, to run, to leap, like happy Gypsy, all her crippled years forgotten like a dream gone by.

“Oh, Peace!” said Gypsy, in the dream, “Oh, Peace, I am so glad!” and springing forward, tried to throw her arms around her neck. “I must go,” said Peace, “to thank Him,” and glided out of Gypsy’s clinging arms, and turned her face towards Galilee, and vanished in the line of gold, and there was nothing left but the sighing of the waves upon the shore, and Gypsy sat alone.

She woke with a start. The room was dark and the house was still. Far up the street a distant sound was drawing near. As she lay listening to it, it grew into the clatter of horses’ hoofs. They drew nearer and louder, and rattled up and rattled by; they had a sharp, hurried sound as if they were on an errand of life

and death. She jumped out of bed, went to the window, and looked out. In the faint moonlight she caught a glimpse of the doctor's carriage.

“ What a queer dream,” she thought, going back to bed, “ and how pretty ; I suppose it is because I have been down to see Peace so much lately, and then I was reading mother that chapter to-night about the lame man. I'll tell it to Peace to-morrow, and — and —”

She was asleep again by that time.

To-morrow came, and Gypsy woke early. It was a rare morning. The winds, sweeping up over beds of late summer violets, and nooks where the bells of the Solomon's seal were hanging thickly, and shadowy places under pines where anemones, white and purple and crimson, clustered with drooping heads, were as sweet as winds could be. There was not a cloud in the sky, and in the sunshine there was a sort of hush, Gypsy thought, like the sun-

shine on Sunday mornings. She remembered afterwards having stood at the window and wondered how many happy things were going to happen all over the world, that day, and if any sorrowful things *could* happen, and how sorrowful things could ever happen on such days.

Before she was dressed she heard the door-bell ring, wondered who it was so early, and forgot all about it in tying a new green ribbon — a beautiful shade just like the greens of the apple-trees — upon her hair. Before she had finished twisting and pulling the pretty bow upon the side (Gypsy always made pretty bows), Winnie came stamping in, and said that there had been “a funny little Irish girl, with a flat nose and two teeth, down ringin’ the door-bell, and now mother just wanted to see Gypsy Breynton in her room.”

Gypsy gave a last look in the glass, and went, still fingering the ribbon. She could

never look at that pretty green ribbon afterwards without a shiver ; for a long time she did not want to wear green ribbons at all. The least little things are so linked with the great ones of our life.

Her mother was still in bed, — she seldom rose now till after breakfast, — and Gypsy, going in, saw that she looked startled and pale.

“ Gypsy, shut the door a minute, and come here.”

Gypsy shut it, and came, wondering.

“ Miss Jane Maythorne has just sent up a message.”

“ A message ! ”

“ For you ; from Peace. She wants you. Gypsy, my child, she is — ”

Gypsy paled, flushed, paled again, caught her mother’s hand with a queer idea to stop the words that she was going to say, — not to hear them, not to know them.

“ They sent for the doctor at midnight,” said

Mrs. Breynton, softly kissing the little appealing hand. "They thought that she was dying then. He says she cannot live till night."

It was said now. Gypsy drew a long breath, kissed her mother, put on her things and went out into the hushing sunlight. Ah, how changed it all was now; how bleak, and thin, and white it seemed; Gypsy noticed, as she ran along, a huge, white rock, on which it lay thickly,—it made her think of a tomb-stone. The leaves of the silver aspens, fluttering in the wind, reminded her of grave-clothes. In the shadows that fell and floated under the trees, she seemed to see the face of Peace, lying with closed eyes, and motionless. She ran fast and faster, to escape the horrible, haunting pictures, but they chased her and followed her into the narrow streets, and went with her up the dark, hot stairway. At the door of the room she stopped. A strange dread came over her. She had never seen any one die, and for a moment

she forgot that it was Peace, and that Peace wanted her, in the horror of the thought, and lingered, without courage to go in.

While she stood there, one of the neighbours opened the door and came out crying. Gypsy caught a glimpse of Peace, and slipped in, and all her fear was gone.

The doctor was there, dropping medicine at a little table by the window. Aunt Jane was there, fanning Peace gently, her stern face softened and shocked. Peace was lying with her hands folded, her face turned over on the pillow in the old way, her eyes closed. The Sabbath-like sunlight was falling in as it always fell into that room, — turning its bare floor and poor furnishing to gold, painting the patchwork quilt in strange patterns of light and shade, like some old tapestry, glorifying the face of Peace where it fell around and upon it. Gypsy, as she came in, had a fancy that it must look something like the faces of pictured saints framed in dusky

niche of old cathedrals across the sea, — she had heard her mother tell about them.

Peace did not hear her come in, and Gypsy had knelt down on the floor beside the bed, right in the light, which struck out sharply the contrast between the two, — before she knew that she was there. She opened her eyes suddenly and saw her.

“ Oh -- why, Gypsy ! ”

Gypsy put up her hand, and Peace took hold of it.

“ I’m so glad you’ve come,” she said, in her quiet voice, with the old, quiet smile. And Gypsy said not a word for wonder. How could anybody smile who was going to die?

“ Would it trouble you too much to stay a little while ? ” asked Peace, forgetting herself, remembering how to think for the comfort of others to the very last, as only Peace could do.

“ Trouble me ! Oh, Peace ! Do you think I could go away ? ”

"I want to talk a little," whispered Peace; "not now,—I can't now. Perhaps I shall get a little breath by-and-by."

She said no more after that for a long time, and Gypsy knelt upon the floor, and held her hand, and watched her suffer, and could not help her, could not bear it for her, could only look ~~on~~ and break her heart in looking.

How much Peace suffered, probably none of ~~them~~ knew. In her death as in her life, she made no complaint, uttered no cry of pain. Only once she called the doctor and said:—

"If you could give me something! It seems as if I had borne as much as I *can*."

For weeks after, the pitiful, appealing words used to ring in Gypsy's ears at night when she was alone.

They gave her laudanum and she slept, and woke to lie in waking stupors, and slept again. The neighbors — rough-faced women in rags — came in, through the morning, to look their last

at her, and go out crying. "God bless her," they said, "the swate craythur! — she always 'ud lay so patient-like, there in the sunshine, an' hear about a body's throubles, whin the childer was sick an' the man was took to drink, an' sech a way of smilin' as she had, the Houly Mither rest her soul!" "It's greeting sair I shall be for her," said one pale Scotch woman, "greeting sae sair." The children — all the little, freckled, frowzy, dirty children that Peace always would find something beautiful about — came in to say good-by and go out wondering who would tell them stories now. Mrs. Breyneton came down at noon, and stayed till her strength gave out, but long enough to see Peace look up conscious and smiling, and to understand the thanks which she could not speak. Aunt Jane sat by the bed, and moved gently about the room, and did what was to be done, still with that shocked, softened look upon her face, and Gypsy, watching her, wondered.

The doctor left, and went to other patients, Peace passed from the stupor to sleep and from sleep to stupor, and the day wore on, but Gypsy never left her.

She had no fear now of this mysterious presence which was coming ; she did not dread to look upon it. The light that, sliding from window to window, still flooded the bed, made the face of Peace, even then, less like the face of death than like the pictured saint.

As Gypsy knelt there on the floor through the long hours, awed and still, watching for Peace to waken, she did not wonder any more that Peace could smile when she was going to die.

Her dream of the night came back to her suddenly. She saw again, as vividly as if she had lived it through, the warm waves of Galilee, the line of gold ; she heard the voice upon the shore, and saw the Figure with its hand up-raised. And suddenly it came to her what

dying meant to Peace, — all the freedom and the strength, and the rest from pain.

The thought was in her heart, when Peace awoke at last, conscious and quiet. It was at the end of the afternoon, and the light was stealing into the West. They were all gone now but Aunt Jane and herself.

“ Peace,” said her aunt, gently, “ Peace, dear.”

But Peace, in her joy at seeing Gypsy there, saw nothing and heard nothing besides. Aunt Jane shrank back; she deserved it, and she knew it, but it was a little hard, now when she might — who knows? — have asked in death forgiveness for that which she had done and left undone to make life bitter.

“ Gypsy, you here yet? Oh, I am very glad.”

Gypsy crept up on the bed.

“ Right here, close by you, Peace.”

“ I want to tell you something, Gypsy; I

want to say you have been so good,---so good to me. And don't you think I'm going to forget it now, and don't think I'm going to forget you. Why, I shall thank Him for you one of the very first things."

At the voice and at the words, Gypsy's courage gave way.

"Oh, Peace, Oh, Peace! what shall I do without you? What shall I *do*?" and could say no more for sobbing, and Peace took her clinging hand and drew it up beside her cheek, and so they lay and said no word; and the stealing light gathered itself upon the hills, and the night came on.

All at once Peace turned, and took away her hand, and pointed at the wall.

"See, Gypsy, — why, see!"

Gypsy looked up. Upon the wall, close by the bed, the illuminated text was hanging, that had been her Christmas gift to Peace over a year ago. Flashes of crimson thrown from the

West, hung trembling over it, and framed in
and transfigured the blue and golden words :

“And the inhabitant shall not say I am sick.”

“Oh, Gypsy, Gypsy, how nice it will be !”

“Yes, dear,” and Gypsy stopped her sobbing.

“To walk about, and run, and not have any pain,—why, think of not having any pain, Gypsy !”

“Yes, dear.”

“Kiss me, Gypsy.”

Gypsy kissed her, and the flush of crimson faded from the blue and golden words, and the twilight fell into its place.

“She’s dropped into another nap,” said Aunt Jane, coming up, turning her stern face away so that Gypsy should not see, in the dark, the hot, fast-dropping tears. So they sat awhile in the dusk together, Aunt Jane moving the great white fan dimly to and fro on the other side of

the bed, and Gypsy crouched among the pillows watching it, watching the face of Peace, watching the blackness gather in the room.

Presently the doctor came in.

“She may hold out till morning, after all, sir,” whispered Aunt Jane; “she’s having a long nap now. I hope she will last a little longer, for I’ve got something to say to her. I meant to say it, I meant to say it. I’ll light the lamp, sir.”

She lighted the lamp; she went up to the bed, holding it and shading her eyes.

Then through the silence, a cry “tore upwards,” like the cry of a stern heart breaking under that most pitiful of human pains,—a life-long, unavailing regret.

But the lamplight fell upon the wall, and fell upon the blue and golden words, and **Gypsy** saw them and saw them only.

CHAPTER XIV.

TROUBLES NEVER COME SINGLE.

DE all of us, if we live long enough, find our saint. You do not understand what I mean? Well, perhaps you will, some day.

Gypsy, young as she was, had found hers.

She had loved Peace Maythorne with all her heart. And now that she was gone, she loved her more than ever. The beautiful, sorrowful life, and beautiful, happy dying, followed her like watching angels; the patient face with its pale, gold hair and quiet eyes, and the smile upon its lips, hung, like those pictured faces in the old cathedrals to which she had likened it, in a very quiet, shaded corner of her heart, —

a corner where noisy Gypsy, and rude Gypsy, and angry, or selfish, or blundering Gypsy never came. It looked at her Mondays and Tuesdays and Wednesdays, when "the days were rough," and lessons were long, and patience was short. It smiled at her in the Sabbath twilights, when her thoughts grew "sorry" and sober. It turned upon her when she was alone at night, when the tears fell, and stars peeped in at her window, that were looking down on Tom miles away by the Southern rivers, in camp, in battle, in prison, or — for who could tell? — in some grave dug quickly in the sands and left alone. And in this, where the pictured face had always been most help and comfort to her, it was most help and comfort now. She could not forget how Peace had sorrowed for her, had cried with her, had kissed her when she talked of Tom, nor what she had advised for him, nor what she had hoped for him. And one thing that Peace had said in

that very last talk, she could not forget, and she did not try.

You think that I am talking poetry? And you wonder what saints and cathedral pictures have to do with merry Gypsy? Wait till some one very dear to you passes out of life, and you will wonder no longer. You will see how the little bare room, -- very empty and cold it used to seem, and the sunlight lonely, — the painful bed which Peace had left vacant and silent and smooth, the very roads that had led so long to her poor home, and the still spot behind the church where she was lying, became sacred places to Gypsy. You will see how in all her temptations and troubles and hopes and fears, Peace became more help to her dead than she had been living.

“ I miss her, Oh, I *do* miss her ! ” she wrote to Tom ; “ and now mother is sick, and I can’t keep going to her as I used to, and there is nothing left of Peace but that grave over there

(mother's given me some tea-roses to plant on it), it does seem as if there weren't anybody to stop me when I get ugly and cross and wicked. But then, Tom, if you'll believe it, I don't cry very much about her. I *can't*. To think of her up there walking round, — for mother says she *does* walk round, — and to think about that pain, and Aunt Jane, and how she is rid of it forever and ever and ever, — why, it just seems as if I ought to be glad of it. Now, Tom Breynton, don't you tell, will you? but I should like to know what she is doing in these days. I do hope she isn't singing Psalm-tunes all this time; but then the hymn-books say so, and I suppose of course they must be true, — o — I was going to say 'old things!' but I guess that was wicked, so I won't."

Troubles never will come single, and while thoughts of Peace were yet very fresh in Gypsy's heart, there came startling news from Tom.

It came on a rainy day. It was a dreary

rain ; the streets were muddy, the trees were dripping, the grass was drenched, the skies were lead. Gypsy came home early from school, exchanged her rubber-boots and waterproof for dry clothes, and sat down by the parlor window to string some beads.

“ I’ll help you,” said Winnie, magnanimously ; “ I can, just as well as not.”

Gypsy politely declined his offer.

“ If you don’t let me, I’ll just stamp and —”

“ Six red — two white — one, two, three, — Oh, Winnie ! ”

“ Squeal and holler and —”

“ Do, — and wake up mother.”

“ Frow some water at you,” finished Winnie, with superb superiority ; “ frow some water out the tin dipper, with a little ’larsis in it I put in to look at, — no I didn’t drink it either, I only put it in to look at, and some sugar, too, and a little vinegar and pepper and, — well, I’m going to frow it at you, anyway, and you won’t know

anything about it, you see. Now going to give me these old beads?"

"Why, there's the door-bell! Run, Winnie, like a good boy."

Winnie stamped to the door, and came back with an envelope in his hand, and said that there was a man who wanted seventy-five cents.

"Why!" said Gypsy, wondering. "A telegram! Run up and tell mother, — no, on the whole, I won't wake her; I have her purse in my pocket."

She paid the messenger and sent him off, and went to the foot of the stairs, and stood still with the envelope in her hand.

"Perhaps I had better open it," she said, half to herself, half to Winnie, dreading to do so, she knew not why, dreading, too, to go to her mother. "If there should be anything bad, — and father is at the store, — perhaps it would make her worse to read it herself. I wonder what it can be!"

“ Why don’t you open it then ? ” said curious Winnie, peering through the banisters.

“ I — can’t, somehow,” said Gypsy, and stood still and looked at it. Then she tore it open and read, — names, dates, blurring before her eyes, — a few words only awfully distinct : —

“ *Your son was wounded in the shoulder this morning ; may not live through the day.* ”

They had told his mother somehow, they never knew exactly how. She had not fainted, nor shed tears. She had sunk down weakly on the bed, and closed her eyes, and said one thing only, over and over : —

“ And I cannot go to him ; cannot go to him ! ”

In all the shock and horror, that was the sting. Her slowly-gaining strength was not yet enough ; the journey would be death to her. Tom could not see her, could not feel her last kiss on his lips, must die without his mother.

“ You must go, Gypsy ; you must tell him — Oh, Gypsy, how can I, *can* I bear it ? ”

“Oh, mother, mother! — poor mother!”

And Gypsy forgot all about herself, and drew her mother's face into her arms, and all the rest went out, and the two lay down upon the pillows and sobbed and moaned together.

Yes, Gypsy must go. She had a dim consciousness, as she hurried about to get ready, of saying Thank you, to some one, that she could go.

“I never thought about saying my prayers for ever so long after that,” she said afterwards, “but it was so queer how I kept saying Thank you, just as if I couldn't help it. It would have been so terrible not to see him again.”

It was strange work, this making ready. The house looked odd, and dark, and unfamiliar. Winnie, poor little fellow, only half able to understand what was going on, went off into a corner and had a frolic with the kitty. Gypsy looked on and wondered how he could laugh, — how anybody could laugh, —

how she had ever laughed, or could ever laugh again. She wondered, too, that she did not forget things, in her preparations for the journey. But she forgot nothing. She packed her bag and her father's carefully; she stopped to think to put up her cologne-bottle, wondering if it might not come in use for Tom; to stick into the corners a roll or two of old soft linen, a sponge, and a little flask of brandy. She had an idea that he would not be properly taken care of at the hospitals, and that she had better, at any rate, have these things with her. There were some ripe, fresh oranges on the pantry shelf. She took them up, but dropped them suddenly, and sat down with a sick faintness creeping all over her. Perhaps Tom would never eat again.

He had been carried, just after the fight — a mere skirmish, they saw by the evening papers — to one of the Washington hospitals; that, they found out from the dispatch,

which poor Gypsy, in the blindness and bewilderment of bearing the sight of it first, and bearing it all alone, and knowing that all the rest must hear of it from her, had only partially read. The army were on the march, her father said, their camp hospitals probably broken up; he was glad that they had sent Tom to Washington; he could receive better care; there was more chance—; there he broke off, and pulled his hat over his eyes, and Gypsy waited in vain for the rest of the sentence.

The night train to Washington carried them both, sitting side by side, looking now and then into each others' faces, but saying scarcely a word. Neither wanted to talk. There was nothing to say. And that was worst of all. If there had been *anything* to do but bear!

Gypsy sat by the window. She could not sleep, and so she leaned her forehead on the glass and looked out. She had never travelled

in the night before, and the strangeness of it fitted her terrible errand. She watched the blackness that lay thickly beyond the window, in the shade of forest and tunnel, and the dead outlines — blackness cut in blackness — of trees and fences, houses, spires, hill-tops, streams, and flats, and bridges whirling by, and the poles of the telegraph lines rising like thin, sharp fingers against the sky, and the sparks from the engine shooting past. The rattling of the axle over which she sat, the sick swaying of the train from side to side, as they flew up and over and down the terrible mountains at the rate of forty miles an hour, the dull patterning of the storm upon the windows, heard through all the clash and roar, the long, loud, human shriek of the locomotive as they rushed through sleeping villages in the twinkling of an eye, the sudden flare of cities and lighted dépôts, where the monster was reined up panting, the groups upon the platforms, — single

faces in them, here a soldier, there a pale woman in mourning, now a girl clinging to her brother's arm, — a brother with merry eyes and hair like Tom's; once a cluster of men in blue uniform, bearing a long, white box upon their shoulders; — all these things Gypsy saw, and heard, and felt; yet of no one was she distinctly conscious; they all blended into one thought, one picture, one dream of Tom.

Sometimes she seemed to see him in battle, his bright, brave face flushed, and eager, and beautiful, his hair blown by the wind, his keen eye taking aim. Then she would hear — hear above all the din of the train and storm — the report of a pistol, a cry, a groan, see his arms thrown up, see him fall and lie still in the blood and horror. After that, it would be the slow journey from the front to the Capital, the painful ambulance jolting and jarring, the face within it, — Ah, Tom would be too brave to cry out. Then the hospital, the long rows of

beds and his among them, the surgeons' faces, the nurses, -- strangers, all strangers ; not one familiar look or smile or touch ; nobody there to kiss him ; none to whom he was dear. And then there was one picture more ; one that swept over all the rest and blackened them out of sight ; one that grew sharper and plainer as the train shrieked on, and the night wore on with it. Tom lying still, very still ; his eyes closed, his hands folded, herself and her father looking dumbly on, — too late.

Gypsy thought that the train crept, crawled, dragged, upon its way. Sometimes it seemed to her as if she must spring up and shriek with the horror of her thoughts. Sometimes as if she must cry out to her father, and throw her arms around his neck, and sob upon his shoulder. But when she saw his face rigid and white, as he sat beside her with his eyes closed and his head laid back, she determined not to add her pain to his, but to bear it alone, and bear it like a woman ; and she did.

That was a horrible night. Perhaps it is not very often — I hope not — that a child of Gypsy's years has such to live through. Anxiety and danger and death come everywhere, and many brave young brothers have gone as Tom went, out of happy homes into which they never came back. But brothers are different, and sisters ; and all are not what Gypsy and Tom were to each other.

But there was one pleasant thing about the night ; one quiet, restful thing, that Gypsy used afterwards to remember thankfully.

At one of the large towns where the express stopped for a moment, there was a little bustle at the end of the car, and two men came in, carrying a crippled girl. There was not room enough for her, and they passed on into the next car, and Gypsy saw no more of her. But she had caught a glimpse of her white face and shrunken shoulders as they carried her through, and it took her quick thoughts back to Peace Maythorne, and that was the pleasant thing.

For she remembered that Peace had said :

“ If you see a man drowning, and throw him out planks and branches and straws, and there is a boat you could have just as well as not ? ”

And the hot tears came, for sorrow and wonder that she could have forgotten to pray for Tom ; that all this long night had been wasted in branches and planks and straws, — in fruitless fears, and useless grief and dreaming ; and the *only* thing that could help him, — why, how *could* she forget ?

So, with the pictured face of Peace smiling in that silent corner of her heart, she told God all the story, — all that she feared, all that she hoped, all that she thought she could not bear. He loved her. He loved Tom. He would do right. She seemed to feel that, after a while, and with the thought in her heart she went quietly to sleep.

Who shall say, what that thought and that prayer had to do with what came afterwards ?

So the night passed, and the morning came, and the garish sunshine, and the burning day, and the sick faintness of the long journey.

They had travelled as fast as steam could take them, and when the next night settled down, they were in Washington.

Gypsy looked out from the carriage window on the twinkling lights and heavy shadows of the city, and thought of that other journey to Washington which she had taken with her cousin Joy; thought of it with a curious sort of wonder, that she could ever have been as happy as she was then; that Tom could have been at home, safe and well, waiting to kiss her when she came, to take her in his strong arms, to look down into her face with his own bright, brown eyes, and pinch her cheek, and say how he had missed her.

Oh, if the bright, brown eyes should never look at her any more! If he should never miss her, never wait for her again!

The carriage stopped suddenly. They were at the foot of the hospital steps. There were many lights in the windows, and some men gathered about the door.

Gypsy caught her father's hand and held it tightly.

"Father"—in a sort of terror,—“don't let's go in yet. Wait a minute. I can't bear to—know.”

But the driver had the door open then, and somebody lifted her out, and she found herself climbing the steps, clinging to her father, and trying not to think.

They went in. Mr. Breynton dropped her hand for a moment, and called a man who was standing in the hall, and said something to him in a whisper.

“Breynton, Breynton!” said the man aloud, “let me see; think I remember the name. Jack, look here!”

Jack came.

She remembered sitting down upon the bed, for the feeling to pass away ; and she remembered seeing her father stagger a little, against the wall. But strangely enough, the only thought she had was that she wished she could cry.

“ My dear child,” said a voice behind her. A hand was laid on her shoulder then, — a very gentle hand, and she turned her head. A sweet-faced lady in mourning stood there, and Gypsy thought that it must be the nurse.

“ My child, there is a mistake.”

“ *What?* ”

“ They made a mistake ; he is not dead.”

“ *Is not dead !* ”

“ And isn’t going to die. He was moved into another ward this morning, and is getting well, dear, as fast as he possibly can. Yes, I mean just what I say ; don’t look so frightened. That is his father ? This way, sir. Come right along, and you shall see him. He has

been having such a nice nap. The surgeon says it is wonderful how fast he is getting up. Right through this door — there ! look over by the window ! ”

They looked. So weak, so white, so brave, so smiling, so beautiful, — who but Tom could have a face like that ?

And when he saw them coming in — well, well, I cannot tell you, and I shall not try, what he said or they. I very much doubt if they said anything ; at least, if they did, nobody knew what it was, for the boys all looked the other way, and the sweet-faced nurse went off as fast as she could go.

But I know as much as this ; that the first thing Gypsy knew very much about, she was sitting down on the bare floor, with her feet crossed like a little Turk, and her face in the bed-clothes. But what she could possibly be doing with her face in the bed-clothes ?

“ I’m sure I don’t know, Tom. Crying ?

Why, what on earth is there to cry about -- Oh, dear ! " — down went the head again — " just as if — you'd gone and died, and here you — didn't ! And here's my hair all down my back, and how you always used to knock it down when you kissed me, Tom, always, and here we are talking you to death, and I shan't say another word, and — *did* you ever see such a little goose ? "

It was many days before Tom was able to be about, others still before he could go home. But Mrs. Breynton, as soon as she had the joyful telegram, sent back word to Gypsy to stay with him if the nurses would let her ; that she was getting strong fast, for joy, and did not need her.

" Would it bother you to have me, Tom ? "

Tom looked ; and Gypsy stayed.

The first morning that Tom was strong enough to bear much talking, Mr. Breynton

sent Gypsy away, nominally to get a walk and the air ; but the amount of it was, that he had something to say to Tom, and she understood it.

She never knew what it was, nor any one else. But she had her guess. For when she came back, her father's eyes were moist, his nervous lip trembling, and into Tom's voice and manner there had crept a certain tenderness that was not always there. There was always more or less of it, after that, in his treatment of his father, and his mother and Gypsy used to look on rejoicing. If Mr. Breynton had erred in his management of his son, perhaps he was man enough to say so. That is no concern of Gypsy's or of ours, but this at least is sure, in some way or other Tom had found out, and felt very penitent in finding out, how much he loved him ; and that, whether right or wrong in judgment, he cared far more for his children's best good and happiness than for his own.

One night, the day before they were to start for home, Tom had something to say to Gypsy. It was only a whisper, and there were only four words in it, but it was well worth hearing.

He had been up and about the house, but being a little tired towards night, had lain down to get rested for to-morrow's journey. Gypsy had crawled up on the edge of the narrow bed, and was brushing his hair for him, — very soft and smooth was Tom's curly hair, and very pretty work she thought it was to play with it, to toss it off from his forehead, to curl it about his ears, to make him look at himself in her tiny toilet glass, and call him a handsome fellow, and stop him with a kiss when he began his usual answer :

“ Why don't you give a fellow some recent intelligence while you're about it ? ”

Their father was out, and the men were none of them near enough to hear conversation carried on in a low tone, so that the two were as

alone together. Tom had been lying with his eyes shut, and Gypsy had sat silent for awhile, watching his face, — the sun struck through the western window and fell on it a little. Suddenly she spoke, half to herself, it seemed :

“ I wonder if the boat had anything to do with it.”

“ The boat ! ”

“ Why, yes, — instead of the sticks and straws.”

“ Gypsy, what are you talking about ? ”

“ Oh, I was thinking about Peace, and something she said, and how I remembered it coming on in the cars. I wonder if she isn’t smiling away up there, to see that you didn’t die. Anyway, you’d better thank her for her part of it.”

“ Her part of it ? Gypsy, do talk English ! ”

But not a word would Gypsy say to explain herself.

There was another silence, and Tom was the one to break that.

"Gypsy, look here; father is good to a fellow, after all."

"To be sure."

"And he has told me I might do as I liked about going back; he said what he wanted, but he wouldn't have any *command* about it, for which I gave him three cheers."

"Well?"

Gypsy waited and trembled for the answer.

"It will take six months to get this shoulder in working order," said Tom, in a sort of a growl, half glad, half sorry, "and how is a fellow going to fight with it? — be in the way if I stay."

"You're not a bit tired of it, then?" asked Gypsy, trying not to let her eyes twinkle.

"Well, not — that is to say — exactly,

But when I'm twenty-one, with a little more muscle for the marches, if the war holds out till then, I tell you I'll pitch in, and see it out, and smash the Reb's, anyway, and come through Colonel, if I can't get to Brigadier-General."

"How nice that will be," said Gypsy, who had not the slightest doubt that Tom could be Lieutenant-General if he chose. "So then" and, do her dignified best, she could not keep the little scream of delight out of her voice, — "so, then, you're going home to stay."

"Hum — I suppose so; father has got me a discharge."

"Because you're wounded?"

"Yes, and" — he hesitated; it was rather a bitter cup for proud Tom to drink, but he deserved it and he knew it — "and because — because; well, I was under age, you know."

"Oh."

Gypsy twisted the bright, brown curls about her fingers softly.

"So now you will be at home again all safe and sound, and I shan't have to cry any more nights, thinking about your being shot, — kiss me, Tom."

"There! — well, you won't have too much of a good thing. I'm back to college next September, to get that 'education' father is forever talking about."

"Tom, you are an angel!"

"And, Gypsy, see here —"

Gypsy drew her fingers out of the twining curls, and laid her pretty pink ear to his lips to hear his whisper.

"I'm going to bchazz."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE REAPING.

TOM always kept his promises.

And one day, a long time after that, when Gypsy was quite a young lady, and after her year at the Golden Crescent, which it will take another book to tell you about, in a certain church at New Haven there was a great audience gathered. It was a gem of a day, with the April sun flitting in and out of little clouds that broke into little showers that did nobody any harm, and people flocked in, like bees to a clover-field on a summer morning. There was to be fine speaking, it was said. The orations as a whole, did honor to the class, but there was one which was

expected to attract particular attention. The young man, — “so very young, and *so* handsome!” was buzzed around among the school-girls, — was one of the finest declaimers in college. There were already murmurs of the DeForest when he should become a senior.

How smiling, and flushed in the face, and warm, and packed, and crammed, and uncomfortable, and happy, the audience looked! What a quantity of old ladies, with poke bonnets and palm-leaf fans, and of pretty school-girls, with their waterfalls, and whirlpools, and necklaces, and ribbons, and streamers, and red cheeks, and simpers! How many placid papas in spectacles, and anxious mammas, with little front curls, and mature brothers sitting among the Alumni, and proud, young sisters, with expectant eyes, — all watching the stage, and waiting, and wondering how long it would be before Dick and Harry and Will would speak, and hoping that he would not have to be

prompted, and not caring a straw for all the rest !

It was a merry sight.

Among the placid papas and anxious mammas and expectant sisters was clustered one group that we know. Mr. Breynton was there, by no means *placid*, but as nervous and as happy as he could be, afraid one minute that the boy had not committed his piece thoroughly, and sure the next, that it was something — something, certainly, to have such a son. Mrs. Breynton was there, looking as well as ever, as calm as a moonbeam, but with something in her gentle eyes that any son would like to see turned on him. And Winnie was there, in a new jacket resplendent in new steel buttons, which he was jerking off as fast as he possibly could, by jumping up and sitting down every two minutes by the clock, sticking up his little fat chin on the top of the next slip, and looking round with his mouth open to see

“ why Tom didn’t come and preach, too,—old fellow !” And there was Gypsy,—a little older, with long dresses and kid gloves, and her jaunty hats replaced by a stylish little bonnet all rose-buds and moss—(between you and me, it was made on purpose for Tom’s exhibition, and she made it herself, too)—a little prettier, perhaps, a little more demure, but with the old dimples in her cheeks, and the old mischief in her eyes,—in short, she was still, what she probably will be all her life, just Gypsy, and nobody else. But take her altogether, she was a very pleasant sight to look upon, and of all the pretty, proud little sisters in the hall, Tom thought that none looked prettier or prouder, and I do not know as anybody blamed him. And when, after a certain number of other Toms had said what they had to say, to the entire satisfaction of certain other sisters and mothers, and Tom came out upon the stage as carelessly and easily as he might walk into the

parlor at home, looking as cool and collected and tall and handsome and manly as even Tom could look, and there was a buzz all over the house, and then a silence, and Gypsy heard whispers going around behind her: —

“ That’s the one. That’s he — buzz, buzz. One of the finest declaimers — buzz. De- Forest — yes, buzz, buzz, buzz,” — well, I fancy that there will be few times in her life in which she will be much happier.

And when Tom began, and the house grew still, and he went on, and it grew stiller, and he saw, out of all the crowd, her eager, upturned face, with its parted lips and proud, young eyes, I am inclined to think that he was glad he had “ behaved.”

I cannot tell you the exact subject of his oration, but Gypsy says it was something about Genius and Liberty, and a little about the Future, and that she believes there was something about Life’s Morning, but she could not

understand it to save her — Tom did know so much ! Besides, she was thinking how his moustache had grown.

I suppose Tom's oration was like all other college orations, and that he was just like any other boy who had something to say, and knew how to say it, but when he came to the end, there was a long hush, and then a long burst of applause, and Gypsy was perfectly sure that there never was such a hush or such applause in Yale College before, and perfectly sure that Tom was especially destined by Providence to fill the place of Mr. Edward Everett, and perfectly sure that there was nobody like him in all the world. His father was delighted, his mother content, and Tom himself trying to look very indifferent and very modest, was very glad that it was over. As for Winnie, he had expressed his sentiments sufficiently when the oration was about half through. Tom, in the excitement of his delivery, in one of his choic-

est gestures, chanced to step very near the edge of the stage, — it did look rather uncertain, — and Winnie jumped up with a jerk, and was right out with it aloud, before anybody could stop him : —

“ Ow ! Look a-there, mother ! He’ll tip over ! ”

And Gypsy says that it was “ so remarkable ” that Tom kept his countenance, and went on as if nothing had happened, though there was a smile all over the house.

That day was one long dream of delight to Gypsy. She was so proud of Tom, and Tom was so handsome and kind. It was “ such fun ” to be introduced to his class-mates as “ my sister,” and to see by the flash of his eyes that he was not exactly ashamed of her, in spite of her being “ a little goose that *did* hate Latin, and never could get her bonnets on straight like other girls.” And very pleasant was it, moreover, to have a word or two to say about my

brother,' and to try not to look delighted when one of the Professors who had been talking to her mother, turned around and congratulated her on his success, and told her in his dignified way, that "her brother's conduct at college had given great satisfaction to the Faculty."

And very pleasant was it when the bustle and excitement of the day were over, when busy Tom stole fifteen minutes away from all his class engagements, and went out to walk with her by moonlight to show her the elms. On the whole, it was the best part of the day. For the light fell down without a cloud, and there was all the wonder and the glory of the long colonnades and netted arches of silver and shade, and the sky looking down — she stopped even then to think — silent and glad, like Peace Maythorne's eyes ; and then there was Tom's face.

"Oh, Tom, did you ever?" she began softly, patting his arm in her old way, as if he were a kitten.

“ Did I ever what ? ”

“ Why, it is so nice ! And that Professor said, you know, ‘ He — his conduct ’ — let me see, I’m afraid I can’t get it straight.”

“ He’s done himself proud ? Well, it’s little enough to anybody but you and mother and the rest. But it might have been less.”

“ And, Tom,” — half under her breath, — “ just think of the days when we were so afraid, and I used to watch and worry, and to think I ever thought you *could* be like Francis Rowe, — why, to think ! ”

“ Gypsy, look here.”

Gypsy looked. Tom’s tone had changed suddenly, and his merry eyes were earnest and still.

“ I’m not the talking sort of fellow, and I can’t go on like the story-books, and say it all over about gratitude and the rest, but I know this much. I should not be where I am to-day if it weren’t for you.”

"Oh, Tom *dear!*!"

"No, I shouldn't. If you hadn't been so patient with a chap, and had such a way of keeping your temper and doing things, and if you hadn't had such great eyes — well, I guess that will do; thought I'd let you know, that's all."

Gypsy gave his arm a little squeeze, and pretty soon down went her face on it, — pink rosebuds and all, — and that was all the answer she had for him.

CENTRAL CIRCULATION
CHILDREN'S ROOM

